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OSPEL FOR MAIN STREET

CHARLES R. BROWN

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THE GOSPEL FOR MAIN STREET

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BY

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FOREWORD

The fortunate people who live on the avenue or around the campus comprise a very small percentage of the total population. The larger part of the world's work is being done by men and women who live and move and transact their business on "Main Street." This book is frankly addressed to them rather than to those who like to refer to themselves as "the intelligentsia."

One of the most gracious statements recorded in the Four Gospels regarding the One "who spake as never man spake" is to the effect that "the common people heard Him gladly." Heaven be praised for that ready response from the rank and file! If we as ministers of Christ in this twentieth century can so shape up our messages as to merit some modest portion of that same high praise, we shall count ourselves happy.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The Gospel for Main Street	3
II.	"My Brother's Keeper?"	24
III.	Religious Certainty	41
IV.	The Average Man	59
V.	Brain and Brawn	76
VI.	What Jonah Did	89
VII.	Unnoted Gains and Losses	102
VIII.	Taking Away Sin	116
IX.	The Man with the Withered Hand	134
X.	Knowledge and Reverence	152
XI.	The Divine Presence	168
XII.	The House of Mercy	182
XIII.	Where Do We Go from Here?	202
XIV.	Real Religion	217
XV.	The Land of Promise	234
XVI.	His Last Will	249

THE GOSPEL FOR MAIN STREET

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CHAPTER I

THE GOSPEL FOR MAIN STREET

YOU may think that "Main Street" is located entirely in Gopher Prairie. You are mistaken. Main Street is everywhere. It reaches clear around the globe. It runs straight through the heart of New York and Boston, of London and Paris, of Calcutta and Shanghai. And along that broad thoroughfare, all sorts and conditions of men and women live and move and transact their business. All the dull, dreary phases of life which you saw in Gopher Prairie will be found on every block of this greater Main Street which stretches from the rising of the sun even unto the going-down of the same.

Here in a short story, which I will quote to you,

we find that there was a Main Street in the city of Jerusalem.

"One of the Pharisees desired Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and sat down to meat. And behold, a woman of the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment and stood behind him at his feet, weeping. She washed his feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.

"When the Pharisee who had bidden him saw it, he said to himself, 'This man, if he were a prophet, would have known what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, for she is a sinner.'

"Jesus, perceiving his thoughts, said to him, 'Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee.' And Simon answered, 'Master, say on.'

" 'A certain creditor had two debtors, one owed him five hundred shillings, the other fifty. When neither had anything to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most.' Simon answered, 'I suppose, he to whom he forgave most.'

"Jesus said, 'Thou hast rightly judged. Seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house. Thou

gavest me no water for my feet. This woman hath washed my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. Thou gavest me no kiss. This woman hath kissed my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint, this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore, I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.'

"And, turning to the woman, he said, 'Thy sins are forgiven. Thy faith hath saved thee. Go in peace.' "

Here was Main Street in Jerusalem! The New Jerusalem, where everything is fair and fine like a bride adorned for her husband, had not come as yet. But Main Street, Jerusalem, was not just one kind of street. There was the upper end of Main Street, which ran through the best residence section. Here were beautiful homes, well built, well furnished, solid and substantial as banks! Simon the Pharisee, who is mentioned in the story, lived in one of these homes. He was an upright, prosperous man, "one of our leading citizens," they said at the synagogue just around the corner, where

wealthy Hebrews worshiped the Lord "in the beauty of holiness," as the saying is. Simon the Pharisee sat on the broad aisle. He was typical of the upper end of Main Street, where it was paved with asphalt and lined with trees.

Then the street ran on down through the business section. Here were banks and stores, shops and office buildings, whole blocks of solid prosperity. Here the street was paved with granite, which would last longer than asphalt. Here men were "making money," as we say in our careless phrase. You could hear the jingle of the guinea all day long. And to the ears of these business men, it made the sweetest sort of music. They never said, "Money talks"—that would have been prosaic. They said, "Money sings." Silver and gold took the leading rôles on that part of Main Street. And when they sang those business men enjoyed the music they made more than they would have enjoyed grand opera.

Then the street wound its way on down to the lowest, ugliest part of the city. This section would have been across the railroad had there been a railroad in those days. Here were the slums! Here were tenement-houses, unfit for decent animals, to

say nothing of self-respecting humans! Here the street was paved, not with asphalt nor with granite —it was paved with dirt and blood and tears. Here were poor people, struggling to keep their heads above water and the rent paid.

Here, worse than all, were vice and crime! Women for whom the color of life was scarlet, eating the bitter, black bread of shame! Here were men also—some of them from the upper end of Main Street. They came at night with their coat-collars turned up and their faces turned away from the light when they passed the street-lamps. It was an ugly sight, the lower end of Main Street! It is an ugly sight anywhere. Main Street is just a cross-section of human society from the highest to the lowest.

Now strangely enough, here in the story the two ends of Main Street were brought together. The street doubled on itself, and the two extremes met. Simon the Pharisee, that wealthy man you saw sitting on the broad aisle at the synagogue, had invited Jesus of Nazareth to take dinner with him. The Master went—he usually went. He was social in his habits—"the Son of Man came eating and

drinking." He was so much of "a diner out" that men accused him of being "a gluttonous man and a winebibber." This was untrue, but people never thought of saying that about John Calvin.

When Jesus entered the Pharisee's house and sat down to meat, he found a well-spread table and all the signs of affluence. The dining-room opened apparently directly on the street, or was itself an open porch, like the "lanai" in the Hawaiian Islands.

Presently there came along a woman from the lower end of Main Street. Her face, her dress, her manner all indicated the kind of life she had been living. She saw the two men sitting at meat, Jesus of Nazareth and Simon the Pharisee. One of the two she had seen before. Now as she stood there it all came back to her—the look of sympathy in that great, kind face, the accents of forgiveness for those who had done wrong which she had heard falling from those lips, the atmosphere of friendliness which had awakened in her poor heart a strange, wild impulse to be something better than a woman of the street.

It all came back to her, and she longed to break

away from the hateful life she had been living. She could not control herself. She crept into that dining-room and knelt down at his feet and cried like a child. Her tears dripped on his feet, until, vexed with herself for making such a show of her feelings, she hastily brushed them away with her hair, which hung loose down her back as a badge of her trade.

What a scene! What a scene to be enacted in a respectable dining-room at the upper end of Main Street! Simon the Pharisee was horrified. Who would not have been? "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, for she is a sinner." And for a sinner to enter the home of respectability, even with tears of penitence in her eyes, was to Simon the Pharisee like seeing the sun rise in the west. It turned everything end for end and upside down. No sin-sick soul had ever cried at his feet, even though he was a member of the Jewish church in good and regular standing. "She is a sinner," he said, and a look of disgust clothed his face as with a garment.

The Master saw it all with clear eyes. He knew

what was in man and needed not that any should tell him. But the situation set up in his mind and heart a very different sort of reaction.

There you have the scene—it speaks for itself. Notice the outstanding phases of it as they suggest the different ways in which the different sections of Main Street dealt with wrong-doers.

First, there was Simon's way—he represented the upper end of the street. He looked the unhappy woman over from head to foot and summed it all up in one unfeeling phrase—"she is a sinner."

He was well within the facts—she was just that. And her wrong-doing had taken that coarse, ugly form which leads decent society to shut the door in the faces of all such women with a slam. And we are not to lose our heads about it; we are not to become sloppy and sentimental. Nothing can be said in defense of such wrong-doing—it is vile. Any woman who enters that profession drags the fair name of womanhood in the dirt. She is guilty of moral defiance against her own sex and against her God. Even the All-Merciful could find nothing to say in palliation of it. "Her sins are many," he

said with a note of sadness. He felt the tragedy and the horror of it.

But there it is! You will find that evil on some part of every Main Street on earth. What are we going to do about it? Simon the Pharisee did not propose to do anything. "She is a sinner," he said, and when he had uttered that cold, harsh word of condemnation, he was ready to wash his hands of the whole business and go on with his dinner.

That is the attitude which the upper end of Main Street usually takes toward that sort of wrong-doing; and there is no hope and no help to be found in that. The spirit of scorn never redeemed a human soul. Satan does not cast out Satan. If that is all that the upper end of the street has to say, then it does not deserve its place of privilege or its sheltered life. Alas for the rarity of Christian charity in certain quarters!

Turn your eyes away from that unhappy woman to another sort of wrong-doing altogether. Pass on down the street to that section where we saw those business blocks. Here were "self-made men," as they liked to call themselves, very proud oftentimes of the job in their prosperous complacency. Some of them—not all of them—had climbed to

their affluence by methods which would not bear the light of day nor the eye of the Master. They had exploited the public. They had trampled on the weak and had taken advantage of the unwary. They had piled on all the traffic would bear, regardless. It had been a cut-throat game—they did the cutting, allowing other men to furnish the throats. They had looked out for Number One, letting the devil take Numbers Two, Three, and Four. In their mad pursuit of gain, they had shown scant regard for the human values involved. And in doing all this, many of them had become hard, mean, sordid.

What attitude does society take toward those men? It does not always say of them, "They are sinners." It does not as a rule shut the door in their faces with a slam. Why not? Is not greed as ugly and as deadly as lust?

Read your New Testament! You will find there that the strongest condemnations Jesus uttered were not directed against the coarse sins of the flesh, bad as they are. He bore down hardest on the sins of greed, self-complacency, and cold-hearted indifference to the needs of others. Here in the gospel of Luke he drew a picture of one man who was

actually suffering the torments of hell. And to our amazement, Dives, the man in the picture, was not accused of being drunken or licentious. There is no hint that he had gotten dishonestly a penny of that money which enabled him to fare sumptuously every day and to be clothed with purple and fine linen. He was condemned, not because he was vicious, not because he was rich, but because he had been so downright selfish as to allow a poor sick man named Lazarus to die at his gate unrelieved. That was the type of wrong-doing against which Jesus uttered his plainest warnings. This was the deadliest sin, in his judgment. He looked into the eyes of men like Simon the Pharisee and Dives and told them frankly that there were publicans and harlots who would enter the kingdom of heaven long before they would. It shocked some of the pious people of that day—it sounded to them like the utterance of some radical. But there it stands in the record.

The scorn which Simon showed toward that wretched woman did not help her, and it will not help those men who are becoming sordid in their money-getting. Satan does not cast out Satan. The devil of contempt does not turn around and cast out

all the other devils. The lack of charity for the failures of others works out terrible results. "Whatsoever sins ye retain, they are retained." "What you bind on earth," by your wholesale condemnation, "is bound in heaven," in the realm of moral permanence.

Scorn hardens and fixes people in their wrong-doing. When some foolish girl makes a slip from the path of purity, the world's scorn may speedily harden her into a brazen candidate for "Mrs. Warren's Profession" and all the rest of it. She goes down to the lower end of Main Street to ply her trade. If society has nothing but harsh words for the man who is becoming materialized by his business interests, he is liable to clutch the bag a bit tighter and to go right on in his worship of Mammon. When the upper end of the street takes that attitude toward any kind of wrong-doing, it fails to help.

In the second place, how did the lower end of Main Street regard this sinful woman? The people on the lower end of the street had long since become lax, easy-going, Bohemian. They prided themselves upon being careless, flippant, cynical.

"What is the difference?" they said with a laugh. "It all comes in the day's work, the good and the bad. And it is all pretty much alike—there is not much to choose between the evil and the good. Evil is only good in the making, one of 'the growing pains of virtue.' This woman with her hair down her back merely claimed her right to live her own life in her own way." "The drunkard reeling down Piccadilly is after all only engaged in a mistaken quest for God," as one famous exponent of this roomy doctrine said a few years ago in London.

So they go along mixing their colors until nothing is black and nothing is white—it is all a dull, sodden gray. Nothing is right, and nothing is wrong—it is just "a series of complexes." Conduct is just "a set of nervous reactions induced by various forms of external stimulus."

The woman in Simon's house had heard that sort of talk at the lower end of Main Street until she was sick of it. She knew how utterly hollow and insincere much of it is. You can make out quite a case on paper for the notion that men and women do not choose between right and wrong, that they are merely thrust in this direction or in that by

forces over which they have no control. But that claim is killed at the very start by the fact that no one ever thinks of living by it. We praise people for their right actions and we blame them for their wrong actions. We hold them accountable, because we know that sane people are responsible for what they do.

If I should see some man who holds those views walking down the street, and should suddenly go up to him and slap him in the face and call him a scoundrel, he would resent it. He would know perfectly well that I did not need to do that, and that I had no right to do it. He would promptly throw his behaviorism and his moral determinism out of the window—and he might knock me down, which would be entirely appropriate.

Now if all this talk about "behavioristic psychology" and "moral determinism in ethics" were anything more than a lot of fantastic theories, it would be just as foolish and inconsistent in him to show indignation at my insult as to blame a loose brick on a tall chimney for being blown off on a windy day and hitting somebody on the head. The brick cannot help itself—I can. We choose our words and

we decide upon our actions, and that is all there is about it.

There may be such things as "complexes"—I think there are—but they are not omnipotent. They do not decide the issue. And I suppose we all feel that all this hullabaloo which has been made about them in recent years has been somewhat excessive. I may come upon the scene with the dice loaded against me to a certain extent by heredity, environment, and certain hostile obsessions in my own brain—many a man does. But by my own determination, by laying hold upon all the help within reach and by opening my heart to that divine grace which is not far from any one of us, I can do a great deal to overcome that original handicap. By working at it steadily, I can be loading those dice all the while on the other side, until presently I find myself playing the game of life with honest dice on even terms. It lies within the power of every man by the grace of God to become the master of his fate and the captain of his soul.

The very challenge of difficulty calls out his moral reserves. "Him that overcometh"—not the man who lies down and whines or the one who

follows the line of least resistance in lazy surrender, but the man who stands ready for a stiff climb!—"Him that overcometh, I will make a pillar in the temple of my God and I will write upon him my new name"—not Jones or Smith or Brown, but that "new name" which indicates his hidden capacity for something higher.

The poor woman in Simon's house had heard that doctrine of fatalism preached, and she knew that there was no help there for her. Here at last she was destined to hear something better.

How, then, did the Master regard that situation? He knew Main Street from top to bottom—no one ever knew it better. He never forgot for one moment the difference between right and wrong. To him it was like the difference between heaven and hell. In the picture he drew of the final judgment, he said that the difference between good people and bad people was like the difference between sheep and goats. The man who is deliberately and persistently bad, cold, hard, selfish, godless, is another kind of animal altogether—he is a goat. Jesus would never have suggested that, after all, there was not much difference between Mary his mother and that woman

of the street. Even in that hour when she crept into Simon's house and cried as if her heart would break, there was a tremendous difference. The woman who has maintained her honor, sometimes at the cost of a long, hard struggle, stands at a long remove from the woman who has made herself an article of merchandise, either outside of wedlock or inside. Jesus kept his colors distinct and his moral discriminations clear and firm.

But he had always an eye for the hidden capacity in every life for something better. He saw the man within the man and was there to bring it out—the true man who is sometimes obscured by a bit of bluff, or overborne by an occasional outburst of the animal nature. He saw the woman within the woman —the woman who is sometimes hidden away behind convention and make-believe—and he was there to bring out the real woman.

He said to those people on the upper end of Main Street who were showing themselves cold, hard, unsympathetic: "There is something better for you than that. The blood in your veins is turning into ice-water. By this shall men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another. Love one

another as I have loved you." That is the final test of our common humanity.

He said to those men in the business section who were working their heads off and worrying their hearts out to increase their wealth: "There is something better for you than all that. A man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things that he possesses." Life is not made up of *things*. Life is made up of certain qualities of mind and heart. These may go with an abundance of things—they often do—or with a scarcity of things, as the case may be. Seek first the kingdom of God, the rule of the divine spirit in your own life. Then all the things you really need can be added.

He passed on down to the lower end of Main Street, where people were blotting the divine image out of their lives by evil-doing. He said to them: "You too are missing the mark. But the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost. The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor. He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and to set at liberty them that are bruised."

And that is the Gospel, the Gospel of the Son of God, the gospel which is the power of God unto moral recovery to every one who accepts it and acts upon it. "The gospel," as Dean Inge said, "is good news, not good advice." It is the good news that in our quest for life which is life indeed, God is with us and for us. And that means victory all along the line for those who act with him.

We are bound to say that the lower end of the street sometimes responds more readily to the appeal of Christ than the upper end. It was so that night in Simon's house. How differently the two ends of the street treated Christ!

Jesus noticed it and he rebuked his unmannerly host. "Simon, I entered into thy house," with all the claims of an invited guest. "Thou gavest me no kiss," which was the ordinary form of salutation there in Palestine, as shaking hands is with us. "Thou gavest me no kiss. This woman hath kissed my feet. Thou gavest me no water for my feet. This woman hath washed my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. My *head* with *oil* thou didst not anoint, this woman hath anointed my *feet*

with *ointment*"—costly, precious, fragrant, ointment! It was left to the penitent woman from across the railroad to do the honors of the occasion. "Wherefore, I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. Her faith has saved her and she can go in peace." He had for her, as he has for every one who is sorry for his wrong-doing and is ready to do better, a message of help.

Here then is that long, wide street stretching clear around the globe! Here on every block of it are those who have failed morally. Some of them in my way, some of them in your way, and the rest of them in all the other ways known to the minds of men! Deep down at the bottom of their hearts many of them are hungry for a finer quality of life. Their souls are athirst for the living God. The whole street needs him who sat at meat that night in Simon's house. And he is here within speaking distance, within arm's length. He is here saying to us, as He said of old, "Come unto me, all ye that are restless and unsatisfied, and I will give you peace and strength and joy." For this is life eternal, to know him and to walk and work in his ways. And that is the gospel for Main Street.

Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, Whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am: Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because Thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come.

CHAPTER II

"MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?"

"AM I my brother's keeper?" You expect me to say "Yes." I say "No." I am not my brother's keeper. I have no desire to be. There is something officious and patronizing about being any man's "keeper." I want no man to set himself up as my keeper; and I must do unto others as I would have others do unto me. When the position of keeper, therefore, is offered to any right-minded person, he declines.

I am not my brother's keeper—I am, however, my brother's brother. And that is another pair of shoes altogether. We stand on a common footing. We have one Father in heaven. We have a common inheritance of human feelings and interests here on earth. There is an element of give-and-take in all our relationships, that interchange of thought and feeling which is the hall-mark of brotherliness.

He may be rich, I may be poor. He may be un-

taught, I may have a doctor's degree in some branch of learning. He may sit away above the salt socially, I may be down near the foot of the table. No matter! "The colonel's lady an' Judy O'Grady are sisters under their skins."

> The rank is but the guinea's stamp
> The man's the gowd for a' that.
> . . . . . .
> The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
> Are higher rank than a' that.
> . . . . . .
> Then let us pray that come it may,
> As come it will for a' that;
> . . . . .
> That man to man the warld o'er
> Shall brothers be for a' that.

I am my brother's brother, first, last, and all the time. Let me apply that principle in three fields of human interest; in education, in industry, and in religion.

We are all agreed that in the earlier stages of human development, the school may well assume the rôle of keeper. Little children are not old enough to take the reins. In the kindergarten, the primary school, and the grammar grades, their hour for self-direction has not yet come. Wise, conscientious par-

ents and teachers must make themselves responsible for the physical health and mental unfolding, for the cultivation of gentle manners and pure morals in these immature lives, which are only candidates as yet for a full humanity.

But as they emerge into high school and academy, into college and university, there comes a demand for a larger measure of freedom. They claim the right to make decisions for themselves and to learn by educative experience. They want to "prove all things," "hold fast that which is good," and put the rest into the discard, working it out for themselves without forever asking leave. The true teacher is no longer a keeper—he is a wiser, stronger, more experienced associate in those educational processes. It is by that interchange of thought and feeling, that give-and-take of each one's best, that the work of education, the "drawing-out" of the hidden capacity of each life, is carried along. The best type of college comes to be a democracy of learning and of development.

The high privilege of sharing in the government of an institution carries with it exacting responsibilities. "To whom much is given, of him will much be required." Young people who clamor for a larger

measure of responsible freedom are under bonds to show themselves worthy of that high estate. If they are to take into their own hands certain precious interests, they must be prepared to bring upon the field sound sense, moral stability, and a jealous regard for those values which entirely transcend their own personal preferences. If they should show themselves narrow-minded, short-sighted, and cynical, as Cain was when he disclaimed any sense of responsibility for his brother's well-being, the whole enterprise would be wrecked.

I lived once near the campus of a great university where this bit of educational history was worked out. It was a coeducational institution. One night some of the young men got drunk and marched around the campus in a maudlin condition, finally bringing up under the windows of a girls' dormitory, where they sang several obscene songs. The young women were compelled in self-respect to close their windows and pull down the shades.

The president of the university was a man not much given to small talk, but when the time came for action, he was always there. He quietly ascertained the names of the forty men involved in the occurrence, called them before him, talked the mat-

ter over with them, heard what they had to say, and then expelled them all. Some of the year's leading athletes were included in the bunch—they suddenly found themselves "ineligible," and the outlook for athletic honors that season was slim.

Then the whole student body lost its head. The students held a meeting of protest at which the display of strong feeling was considerably in excess of the display of good judgment. They finally passed a resolution demanding the reinstatement of the forty men, coupled with the threat that if this were not done within forty-eight hours, they would all go on strike and refuse to attend recitations. They sent their resolution to the proper authorities, where it did not seem to create even a ripple.

When the forty-eight hours were up, they struck, and for two whole days, when the professors went to their classrooms and to the laboratories, they found nobody there. On the morning of the third day the president posted a notice stating that he would like to meet the whole student body at ten o'clock in the assembly hall. They were all on hand; and this is what he said and all that he said—his words went down in the history of the institution. "The men who were recently expelled for cause

will not be reinstated. It is not necessary that this university should have nineteen hundred students in attendance." That was the attendance at that time. "It is necessary that it should have upon its campus young men who have sufficient self-respect not to get drunk and sing obscene songs under the windows of a girls' dormitory. If any of you prefer not to attend that sort of institution, you are at perfect liberty to go elsewhere. And with that, I will bid you 'Good morning.' " He then walked off the platform, and the meeting stood adjourned.

The students chewed it over for the rest of the day. They thought it over in the quiet of their rooms. They decided, not in a mass meeting, but individually, that they had missed the mark. And the next morning, they were all back in their classrooms, in the libraries, and in the laboratories doing their work, while the forty young men who had gotten drunk were packing up their belongings and getting ready to go home and explain to their fathers and mothers how it all had happened.

It cleared the air—this was more than twenty years ago, and nothing like it has ever happened since. The forty young men had shown themselves incapable of self-government. They needed a

keeper, some one to show them where they got off and to see that they got off there. When it was all over, the students who were still on the roll were prepared to exhibit that larger measure of good judgment and moral stability which is imperative for a democracy of learning. And to-day no university in this country has a larger measure of student self-government than that same institution.

I am my brother's brother. On every campus there is a certain body of common interests and responsibilities. The buildings, the libraries, and the laboratories; the good name of the institution; the confidence and good-will of that mature public whose gifts make possible its continuance and development; the friendship of trained men who have given the best years of their lives to instruction and research; the serious purposes which underlie all these activities, more precious by far than buildings and endowments! All this is in the care and keeping of every member of the college community. No group of young fools, or of old fools, can be allowed to place these high interests in jeopardy. The only mood in which such work can go forward is that mood in which each man stands ready to say, "I am here as a member of the

brotherhood to share in these common responsibilities." That attitude in itself is educative.

Apply the same principle in industry! Here in the workaday world we are all members one of another in a social and economic solidarity from which there is no escape. We are all members of one body, but all members have not the same office. The head cannot say to the foot, the highest cannot say to the lowest, nor the lowest to the highest, "I have no need of you." The man who has five talents of capital and organizing ability cannot say to the man who has only the one talent of his muscle and skill, "I have no need of you," nor vice versa. They are both needed. Those members of the industrial body which are less conspicuous are necessary. On these we bestow a more abundant honor that there may be no quarrel in the body, but that all members should have the same care, one of another. It is only where that general method and spirit prevail that we have industrial peace and prosperity.

Paternalism in industry does not work, and that is the condemnation of it. No man is rich enough or wise enough or good enough to take it upon himself

to be some other man's keeper. Human nature being what it is, paternalism in industry is offensive—it is like a grain of sand in the eye, producing irritation and destroying vision. Lord Bountiful and Lady Bountiful may have the best intentions in the world, but the fact stands that we cannot build an industrial order on that basis. No matter how rich I may be, I am not my brother's keeper, telling him to sit down and be content with that station in life where an all-wise Providence has placed him, gratefully accepting whatever his superiors may hand out to him. It just cannot be done.

Now and then some highly prosperous concern makes another try at it. It may withhold a certain percentage of the wages, which might be paid to its employees, in order to provide a more generous program of "welfare work," including hot lunches and shower-baths, gymnasiums and recreation rooms, playgrounds and garden plots, sick-benefits and old-age insurance. All these things are good; and the beneficent management which provides them expects gratitude and that increased productiveness which comes from willing coöperation.

In almost every case, it is disappointed. The employees prefer to have their full wages paid to

them in cash, allowing them to provide their own "welfare work" as they may see fit. The management cannot say to the men, "We are your keepers." It had much better say, "We are here on the basis of a mutual respect for one another's rights and interests, to work out together in friendly cooperation a larger measure of human brotherhood in terms of economic life."

We find, therefore, a growing demand for a more democratic spirit in the control of the great industries. Shop committees and shop conferences between management and men are increasingly prevalent. The man who invests his five talents of capital and administrative ability in an enterprise has a clear right to be heard and considered in the control of that concern. And the plain men and women, who invest, for all the best years of their lives, their modest talents and muscle and skill, have also a clear right to be heard and to be considered. Their very lives and the welfare of their families are at stake. The head cannot say to the foot, the highest cannot say to the lowest, "I am your keeper." We are all members of one another, and if one member suffers, other members suffer with it.

If two hands get on better when they act together, each one supplementing the work of the other rather than pulling apart in contrary fashion; if two eyes get on better when they act together, each one focusing what it sees in a common image rather than pulling apart in cross-eyed fashion; if two feet get on better when they move along together, taking turns in supporting the weight of the body rather than pulling apart, one of them turning to the east and the other to the west, why not two men, or two classes of men, employers and employees, or two races of men, white men and black men, or two nations of men, Americans and Japanese? Is not that good mathematics and good morals all the way up and all the way down and all the way through? I am my brother's brother in all that this implies.

We find also a growing demand for a more equitable distribution of the good things of life, the joint product of brain and brawn, between those who toil mainly with their heads and those who toil mainly with their hands. I do not say "equal"—in my judgment it is morally justifiable as well as economically desirable that exceptional ability should receive an exceptional reward. It is by that bestowal

of exceptional reward that the development of exceptional ability is stimulated. But there should be "a more equitable distribution," which cannot be made solely according to some iron-clad rule of supply and demand. There must be a steady regard for the human values involved in this huge economic process. We are here not merely to make money, or to make things, but to make manhood and womanhood. Every man must stand ready to say to every other man: "I am my brother's brother! Children we are of one Father, standing together on a common human level, under bonds to promote as far as we may the general well-being of all those whose lives are bound up together in this enterprise."

You may be sure that this is the only social ideal to which high-minded, honest-hearted people will continue to pledge their loyalty. It is for college-trained men who go into business, to furnish the necessary intelligence and conscience for effective leadership in that high task.

How is it all to be worked out? No one can say at this time. If I were able to indicate all the steps to be taken in a few brief, bright formulas, I should be wiser than Solomon ever dreamed of being. No

one knows all the steps to be taken. We shall have to learn as we go, along the road.

But of this we may be sure—if that finer social order of which we dream and for which we pray is ever to be realized, it will come only as each man says, "We are brothers! Let us take hold together, not in selfish antagonism but in friendly coöperation, and move together toward better economic methods."

Once more, apply the same principle in religion. "Call no man Master"—or Keeper; "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brothers." The greatest of the apostles said to that group of plain people in Corinth, "Not that I would have dominion over your faith, but be the helper of your joy." Wise and good though he was, the best man perhaps of his generation, he was not there to lord it over them. He was there to show himself in the finest and fullest sense a brother, ministering to their joy.

We have one church, old, large, influential, which does undertake the rôle of keeper. It speaks always with the accent of authority. It tells people exactly what they are to believe and what they are to do for their eternal salvation, without any ifs or ands about

it. It says in effect: "If you will obediently commit your spiritual interests to our keeping, we will see you through. By our system of sacraments, we are prepared to meet all the more important crises in each life, from baptism, which initiates the new-born babe as a member of the body of Christ, to extreme unction, which prepares the soul for its final flight into a world unseen." And along that line of procedure, millions of honest, earnest people have found peace for their souls.

We naturally respect the honest convictions of those who hold this view; but for other millions of us, all that is simply out of the question. We cannot accept it with intellectual honesty or with the moral approval of our own hearts. For better, for worse, we claim our God-given Protestant right to think and judge for ourselves. We will not allow any man, ordained or unordained, to be the keeper of our souls. We will consult our own tastes and temperaments in making our approach to God. We will believe, not that which is imposed upon us by an external authority, but that which commends itself to our own moral judgment as true. We are all brothers in a common fellowship of thought, of aspiration, of high resolve.

In all that humane service, which is the natural expression of the religious impulse, the same sound principle holds. The condescending, patronizing spirit is taboo in all rightly ordered philanthropy. Let no man think, when he gives to some one needier than himself, that he is doing something grand. "It is more blessed to give than to receive"—in more ways than one it is "more blessed." Giving is always the happier experience. The giver always has the better end of it. "He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity," as one brother shares with another the common bounty which the Father of us all designs for the comfort of us all.

> Not what we give, but what we share,
> For the gift without the giver is bare;
> Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,
> Himself, his hungering neighbor, and me.

I am not the almoner nor the benefactor of that less fortunate life—I am merely trying to show myself a brother.

We have to-day what Dean Hodges of Cambridge once called "the New Philanthropy." Friendship is at the heart of it. The human hand stretched out, warm, open, ungloved, is the symbol of it. It can-

not be carried along through committees, or at the end of a long pole, or through the endless red tape of charitable organization. It demands the touch of life upon life, immediate and direct.

Jesus stood once in the presence of human need, "and he took a broken man by the hand and lifted him up and he arose." The two of them, the helper and the helped, wrought together, and that crippled life was set upon its feet. The workers in the social settlement go down to the neediest section of some city not to hand out bounty and then hurry back to the pleasures of their own sheltered lives. They plant a home in the midst and live in it—and by the personal contacts which they make, people of the neighborhood are lifted to higher levels of being. It is the only way which promises social redemption. The whole wide range of human need is crying out not for keepers, but for brothers.

This attitude of which I have been speaking is the only attitude which will bear the eye and stand the test of him who is no respecter of persons. "Stand upon thy feet," the divine voice once said to a man who wanted to be a prophet of the Lord. "Stand upon thy feet"—even in the divine presence, groveling on the one hand and patronage on the

other were deemed unfitting. "Stand upon thy feet, and I will speak to thee."

We are here on the basis of mutual love and respect for one another, to become branches of the one true vine, to live as children of the one God and Father, who is above all and through all and in us all. In the work of education, in the weary round of industry, in the spiritual achievements of religion, we are here to work out the purposes of him from whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named. When we are living in that high mood, we shall see the kingdom of God coming with power.

Then let us pray that come it may,
As come it will for a' that;
. . . . .
That man to man the warld o'er
Shall brothers be for a' that.

CHAPTER III

RELIGIOUS CERTAINTY

WE are living in a time of religious uncertainty. So many moods, so many minds, so many ways, that wind and wind! The Fundamentalist says: "This is the way. Walk in it or you will be lost." The Modernist says in gentler but less confident fashion: "This is the way. Walk in it and you may possibly be saved."

How can we be sure? Is there any final standard of belief? Is there any court of last appeal where we can take our questions and have them answered once for all? Who can say! We are back in the book of Judges. "In those days there was no King in Israel, and every man did as he pleased." In these days there is no King in Israel, and every man may think as he likes.

In my own times of perplexity, I find it profitable to spend another good quarter of an hour with that man who was born blind. Whether we regard that

story as a literal exact record of historical fact throughout or a highly poetic treatment of spiritual reality, I am sure the man has something to say to every one of us.

"As Jesus passed by, he saw a man," who did not see him. The poor chap had never seen green grass nor the blue sky; he had never seen the face of his mother nor his own right hand. He had never seen anything—he was born blind. He had lived all those years in the dark, where everything was black.

One day as he sat there in the dark, he heard a group of men discussing his case. "Master," one of them said, "who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" He had asked himself that question a thousand times. Why, oh, why! Why was I sent into the world without a good pair of eyes? He listened for the reply, but he did not expect much. They would not know; he did not know; no one knew, why he had been born blind.

Then there fell upon his ears a voice, strong, smooth, sympathetic. He had never heard such a voice before. His sense of hearing was keen after the manner of the blind, and he had learned to judge men by the sound of their voices. Now he

heard the voice of one who spake as never man spake.

This is what the voice said: "Who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind? Neither! But that the work of God should be manifest, I must work the works of him that sent me. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." "The light of the world," uttered by that wonderful voice—it sent a thrill through the heart of that blind man such as he had not felt in many a day. The rest of the story, you all know.

Note three outstanding features in that situation as they throw light upon Christian experience as the final source of religious certainty.

First of all, we find here a man ready to obey the word of Christ in the dark. When Jesus said, "I am the light of the world," he anointed the blind man's eyes with moist clay. Then he said to him, "Go wash in the Pool of Siloam." He made no promises. He gave him no assurance whatever as to the results which might be expected. "Go wash" —it was a plain, straight word of command. But there was an accent of authority, as well as of kindliness, in that voice, and the blind man did not

hesitate a moment. He was on his feet instantly, feeling his way along the narrow street toward that well-known pool.

How was he to accomplish it? The pool may have been a mile or more away from the spot where he sat. How could a blind man find his way through those narrow, crooked streets and down those steep stone steps to wash his eyes in that pool? Jesus gave him no directions—he left him to his own devices. He called upon the man to obey in the spirit of faith, leaving the result to him.

The blind man started, trusting that in some way he would be able to put it through. He was like that ignorant colored man in the South who cried out in the joy of his simple faith, "If the Lord tells me to jump through a stone wall, it is my business to jump and it is the Lord's business to see that I get through." The Lord never tells any man to do an impossible or foolish thing. You may criticize the negro's judgment, but the spirit he showed was fine.

God speaks to men in all sorts of ways. Through his word, through his world, by the lips of a friend, by the best one finds in some bit of literature, by the still, small voice which speaks in the depths of

each man's soul! However God may speak, it is every man's duty to obey the highest impulse he has ever felt. He must obey, even if he has to start, as this blind man did, in the dark.

"I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision," the apostle said. He was true to the highest impulse he had ever felt. How splendid life would be for everybody if men generally were true to their best moments and did not intrust their interests to some second-rate or third-rate impulse which comes later as a sorry substitute! "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision"—the man who takes that line is on the path which goes forever upward.

"Go wash in the Pool of Siloam," the voice said, and this poor beggar picked up his tin cup and started. He went his way and washed, and when he came back, he came seeing. He saw the green grass and the blue sky; he saw the walls of the city and the face of that Friend. He saw everything, for he had received sight.

This is the divine method always. It is along the line of trustful, obedient action that men's eyes are opened, and their minds and their hearts. We set forth oftentimes in the dark, putting one foot before the other in an uncertain obedience to what

we believe to be the will of God, in order that we may walk at last in that light where there is no darkness at all.

"All religious experience is an adventure of the soul," Raymond Calkins said. "It is the loyal advance of the whole personality into the realm of the unknown, which becomes known only as one is ready and willing to advance without knowing." We try to do things we do not understand as yet; we try to worship, to pray, and to serve, in order that we may learn to do those things intelligently. And all the people who move out along that line of obedience will have their eyes and their minds opened—they will gain wider and wider visions of the truth.

You may be saying to yourself, "I cannot understand prayer and I am not sure that I believe in it." Perhaps you have not obeyed. You may not be playing the game. You may be sitting out somewhere on the bleachers criticizing the players and chattering about it. You will never learn anything in that way. "If any man has the will to do His will, he shall know." Do, if you want to know! Ask, if you would receive. Seek, if you would find

Him. Knock, and presently you may find youself in the treasure-house of the Unseen.

Try it out—that is the scientific method. The student of chemistry does not stand across the street looking at the laboratory and speculating about the various reactions of all those chemicals. He goes into the laboratory, takes the tubes and materials into his own hands, and begins to make experiments. Then he knows. He is on his way to becoming a chemist. Make proof of the religion of Christ! Experience is the source of religious certainty. "Taste and see that the Lord is good"—it is the only way we can know the Lord.

In the second place, when this man faced questions which were too hard for him, he fell back upon his own experience. When he came back from the Pool of Siloam seeing everything and telling everybody about it, the critics were on hand. They are usually on hand. They were not able to open the eyes of the blind, but they could undertake to throw a little mud on the one who had done that kind deed on the Sabbath. "This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath Day."

They cared more for ritual than for mercy. They were more interested in ceremony than in kindness. "This man is not of God," they said, because he did it on the Sabbath! How blind they were! They needed to wash in the Pool of Siloam, all over. Not their eyes only, but their hands and their heads, and most of all, their hearts!

The critics raised a lot of questions. "How were thine eyes opened?" "What did he unto thee?" "How can a man that keepeth not the Sabbath do miracles?" Here were problems to be solved! I wonder if they used that well-worn term. Did Peter ever set himself to solve a "problem"?

It may be that those critics told the poor fellow that he was still suffering from some sort of a "complex." They probably suggested that even now his eyes were not "functioning" as they should. The record indicates that they insisted that the action of the one who had opened his eyes was not "motivated" properly—he did not keep the Sabbath. They fairly bristled with learned questions, criticisms, and objections. But the man whose eyes had been opened brushed them all aside as if they had been flies. He fell back upon the facts of experience: "He put clay upon my eyes and I went

and washed and I do see." And that was all there was about it.

This poor man was no fool, even if he had lived all those years in the dark. He had been sharpening his wits while many a man with two good eyes had been merely looking out of the window. He asked those critics a question which must have been a poser for their dry minds. "How can a man that is a sinner do this?" he said, pointing to his eyes. "Since the world began, it has not been heard that any one has opened the eyes of one who was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing."

Then the critics hemmed and hawed; they backed and filled; they called the parents of him that was born blind and quizzed them. But their testimony as to the lifelong affliction of their son only added to the confusion of these "conscientious objectors." It is hard to make headway against the logic of facts. "We can do nothing against the truth," except to break our heads on it.

The man who had been blind held fast to the facts of his own experience, and that is the court of last appeal for religious certainty. "Gentlemen," he said, "I am a poor man. I have been

blind all my life. I have never had much of a chance. I never went to Harvard or even to Yale. I cannot split hairs with you in Philosophy or Theology. Whether this man in question is a sinner or not, I do not know. One thing I know, I was blind, now I see."

When any man takes that line, he wins out. When he holds fast to that which he knows through his own obedient trust, by the prayer that has brought relief and help, by the sense of peace and joy in his own heart which he has found along the way of Christian duty, he is invincible. He can walk securely in the strength of that which he knows by experience, and he is on his way to have all his powers quickened into newness of life.

"I being in the way the Lord led me," the servant of Abraham said. He had learned on the road. He would never have started, as Dr. Parkhurst once pointed out, if he had waited around Hebron until he had all the details of his journey worked out in advance, until he could see the end from the beginning. He learned by experience as he went along.

How much is hidden in any Christian life! We do not understand it all before we start. But the

way to begin is clear. Turn your back upon evil as a program of life; face toward the right; make Christian duty your supreme choice in life; put your trust in Him who is the Savior of men, and keep going. All that is plain. You will not reach heaven to-day, but you can get under way. You will not work out a complete Christian life by the end of this week, but you can start. Take the first step to-day, then to-morrow you will see how to take the next step. "Wisdom is knowing what to do next," David Starr Jordan used to say, "and character is doing it." We all learn on the road by personal experience.

This man who had been blind knew hardly any theology, not even what kind of person Jesus Christ was. He did not know anything about the Virgin Birth or the inerrancy of the Scriptures. He did not know anything about the substitutionary theory of the atonement, or the prospects for a speedy, visible second coming of Christ. What he did not know about theology would have filled a library.

He did know enough to obey Christ in the dark when Jesus said to him, "Go wash in the Pool of

Siloam." He did know enough to fall back upon the facts of his own experience when the critics tried to tangle him up with their own questions. "One thing I know." Hold fast to that! Do not let them badger you out of it! "I was blind, now I see."

It was Paul's way. He did not appeal for his authority to the creeds—there were none in his day. He did not appeal to the New Testament—it had not been written as yet; he was writing some of the earliest parts of it himself. He did not appeal to the church—it was just beginning to take shape at that time. Yet how many times he says, "I know." "I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him." "We know that all things work together for good to those who love God." "We know that if this earthly house of our tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God," something not made with hands. How sure he was when he fell back upon the undeniable facts of experience! He believed that experience is the final source of religious certainty.

This blind man had received help from Christ without knowing exactly who Christ was. Here he

serves as a type. How many open-minded, honest-hearted people there are in the world, going about doing good, making the world a better place to live in, showing many of the fine fruits of the spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness and all the rest—without realizing the full significance of the lives they are living! They have somehow caught the spirit of Christ without having shaped it up as yet into a clear-cut philosophy.

Many will say to him in that day, "Lord, when saw we thee hungry and fed thee, or sick, or in prison, or a stranger, and ministered unto thee?" They are not aware of the final source of Christian kindliness. Then, according to the promise, the judge of all the earth will say to them, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these, ye did it unto me." By following the best that they found in their own hearts, placed there by that true light which lighteth every man, they have been brought unconsciously into fellowship with him. And these shall inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

Once more, this man kept his mind open for more light. When the critics could not argue with

him any longer (because he knocked them down with the facts of his own experience, as fast as they could get up) they tried another tack. They cast him out of the synagogue. They could not deny the fact that his eyes had been opened—there he was seeing everything, seeing their own confusion, among other things.

When they said to him, "How were thine eyes opened?" he called out to them gaily: "I have told you once and you would not hear. Would you like to hear it again? Will ye also become his disciples?" That last word was too much for them—they reviled him and cast him out. They could not answer his arguments but they could throw him out of the window because there was a dozen of them and only one of him.

Jesus heard that they had cast him out of the synagogue and he came back to find him. The man saw him coming and he hurried forward to express his gratitude for restored sight. But before he could say a word, Jesus met him with this astounding question, "Do you believe on the Son of God?"

The poor man was nonplussed. He had been rejoicing in the use of his eyes, trying them on everything like a child with a new toy. He had been

thinking how the whole world had been changed for him in an hour. He had been facing life undaunted with his eyes open and his head up. Now he was confronted with this strange question, "Do you believe on the Son of God?"

Here again, however, he showed how sound his method was. "Do I believe on the Son of God? I do not know. I might if I knew more about him. Who is he, Lord?"

An open mind, an honest heart, a spirit willing to be led—that is the attitude which enables a man to learn more. He was like those pilgrims in Holland, "Committing themselves to the ways of God made known and to be made known, believing that God has more light to break from His holy word." They did not know it all—they wanted to know more.

"Who is the Son of God that I might believe on him?" Jesus said: "Thou hast seen him. He it is that talketh with thee." Then the man made an instant response. If believing on the Son of God meant another chapter in that experience of divine help which he had been enjoying, he was ready to go the whole way. "Lord I believe," he said; and then and there, "he worshiped him."

Here in this familiar chapter we have the story not of one act of healing but of two. The eyes in the man's head were opened and he saw clearly all the familiar objects in the streets of Jerusalem. The eyes of the man's soul were opened, and like the pure in heart he saw God. He saw that city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. He stood ready to take up his residence also in that city. The man whose heart has been opened looks not merely at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal but the things which are not seen are eternal. He moves along that line of reverent, obedient trust, seeing more and more, until at last he sees no longer through a glass darkly but face to face.

Who is he, that I might believe on him? Some men are always asking, "How much may we accept?" While other men are asking, "How much can we reject?" Some men are always asking, "How much may we take in?" while others are asking, "How much can we exclude?" The difference between these two attitudes of mind is like the difference between life and death. The man in the first group will have life and have it more

abundantly. The man who takes the other attitude will shrivel up until he becomes just a dry speck.

Will Durant, in his "Story of Philosophy," makes this fine distinction: "Science is analytical and descriptive. Philosophy is synthetic and interpretative. The scientist is content to describe a fact accurately and thoroughly. The philosopher seeks to get at the final meaning and value of that fact and to ascertain its relation to human experience." That is why it is important that we should all become philosophers.

And that is what Jesus sought to do in that plain, straight question addressed to the man whose eyes had been opened. "Do you believe on the Son of God?" He would not allow the man to go away rejoicing merely that he had gained an added physical sense. Eyesight is precious, but eyesight is not everything. Set it alongside of insight, and it falls into second place. It is not enough just to see things. Have you the power to recognize the deeper meaning of those things and to put a more just appraisal upon them in the light of that higher system of values revealed to us by the eyes of faith?

In a word, "Do you believe on the Son of God?"

Do you accept all these benefits and blessings as manifestations of the benign purpose of him whose children we are? Do you accept all these mercies as tokens of his desire that we should live in the filial spirit, as children of an Infinite Father? If you do believe that and act upon it, you are a Christian—and there is nothing higher in human experience. If you too are ready to say, "Lord, I believe," and to worship him and to have that attitude dominate your life, then all the high privileges suggested by this story which has come down to us from the past, are yours. They are yours today and always. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should have eternal life."

CHAPTER IV

THE AVERAGE MAN

THE Declaration of Independence states that all men are created equal. I wonder! There may be equality before the law, theoretically at least—it is not always so in practice. But are all men created equal in personal ability, in opportunity and in the chance to rise? You would say "No." The Master, who knew what was in man, and what wasn't, said "No." He frankly faced the fact of human inequality. "To one man is given five talents, to another two, to another one. To every man according to his several ability!" He saw them lined up before him like a spelling class, some of them because of superior endowment at the head of the class, and some of them at the foot.

Now my concern is not with either extreme. Not with the man who is sure of himself because he feels that he has five talents of superior ability, nor with the man who stands looking at his one

poor little talent, saying, "What is the use?" I am thinking about the man with the two talents, the ordinary man who is neither very rich nor very poor, neither as wise as Solomon nor a dunce, neither a finished saint nor a rascal. He is just an average man. He is in the world "in force," as they say in military circles. He represents the great middle class. Let me say three things about him!

The world is made up in the main of average people. It is so in the matter of money. We have a few millionaires, not many of them when we get down to facts; and we have some people so desperately poor that they lack the necessities of life—they have to be taken care of by charity. But both classes are small in comparison with the large number who enjoy the ordinary comforts.

It is so in the matter of brains. We have a few outstanding scholars, men of genius, men who are ever so much wiser than Solomon was because their educational advantages have been better than his. We have a certain small percentage of people so ignorant that they can neither read nor write. But neither class is very large—most of our people have ordinary intelligence.

It is so in the matter of goodness. We have a few

choice saints whose faces shine like the sun, men like Francis of Assisi and John Wesley, men like Bishop Brent and Wilfred Grenfell—barely enough of them to furnish one saint for each day in the calendar year! We have a few monsters of wickedness whose depravity makes men shudder. But neither class is very large. The world is peopled mainly by men and women of ordinary goodness, nothing prancing or showy but sufficient to put the race ahead and make the world a better place to live in. As a matter of fact, the average man holds the key to the situation because there are so many of him.

"The exceptional people," as Phillips Brooks once said, "the millionaires and the paupers, the sages and the fools, the saints and the scoundrels, are the capes and promontories which jut out into the sea and thus become conspicuous." But the great continent of human life is made up of average people who have two talents apiece. They are the backbone of any nation.

Here in our American life to-day both extremes are overdone. We have too much luxury and too much penury. We need a more even spread of our

prosperity. We have too many people who live without working, and too many people who work without living. We need a more equitable distribution of the burdens and the privileges of human existence. We ought to have more people who work and live and thank God for his goodness in giving them work to do and the strength to do it. The hope of the future lies not with either extreme but with that great middle class of average men and women.

"Give me neither poverty nor riches," a wise man once prayed in the Old Testament. It was a sensible prayer. Let all the people say "Amen." Let them ask the God of heaven to set them down somewhere in the middle class. Why not?

I have two legs. I should be sorry to have only one—it would be most inconvenient. I should be equally sorry to have five legs or fifty or a hundred, like a centipede. I have two—the usual number—legs enough! Why should I want fifty millions of dollars any more than I want fifty legs! I do not want to be a pauper and beg my bread, and I have no desire to be a millionaire. I suppose that in many a group of the financially successful, I should be regarded as a poor man. Yet I cannot

think of anything just now which I really need for growth, for usefulness, for happiness, which is not within my reach. I hardly ever walk down Fifth Avenue, looking into the store windows, without saying to myself, "What a lot of things there are in this world that I do not want!" I am quite content to move along with the great middle class.

The Master sent out two companies of disciples. In the first group there were twelve men, Peter, James, John, and the rest. Their names are known to the whole world. The greatest church in Christendom is named for one of them, St. Peter's at Rome. The Court of the greatest empire on earth is named for another, the Court of St. James's at London. More babies are named for St. John than for any other saint or sinner in the whole history of the race. But there were not many of those first apostles—only a dozen of them and one of them turned out badly.

Then a little later the Master sent out another group of disciples, seventy of them, "the other seventy," who were to go into every city and village where he would have his kingdom come. Nobody knows the name of a single one of them. They were the quiet, obscure people who never do any-

thing conspicuous. They never get into history or into the newspapers. Yet when they returned and reported on their work, we read that "Jesus exulted in spirit." He cried out, "I saw Satan falling like lightning from heaven." He saw the reign of evil being overthrown by the good work of these ordinary people. And there were seventy of them —more than five times as many as the Twelve Apostles. The people of average build if they are headed right and have honest purposes in their hearts, have the future in their hands.

The man with two talents, however, is exposed to peculiar temptations. The brilliant man, who stands out distinct from all his fellows by the fact that he has five talents of ability, is spurred on by the admiration, or by the jealousy, of the less fortunate to do his best. The man with one talent is sometimes stung into action by the very difficulty of his situation. "I will show them yet!" he says to himself, gritting his teeth. "I will make up for my lack of genius by my sheer determination."

But the man of average build, feeling that he will never win distinction nor rise to the top of the ladder on the one hand, nor fall to the lowest round

of utter failure on the other, may move along all his life in a humdrum way doing his work in mediocre fashion. The man in the clouds moving across the sky three hundred miles an hour in an aëroplane and the man at the bottom of the sea in a submarine are impelled to do their best by the dramatic situations in which they find themselves. The man moving along on level ground, playing safe, doing commonplace deeds, may easily fail to make the most of himself just because he has an ordinary task.

Yet you never heard of a battle being won where the commissioned officers did all the fighting. If the officers were wise and brave, they had their full share of honor when victory came. But the issue turned finally upon the fidelity, the courage, the discipline of those plain men without shoulder straps, who counted fours, marched in platoons, obeyed orders, and carried the day. Where would all the titled leaders have been without the rank and file to execute their commands!

The same sound principle holds in that war where there is no discharge, the everlasting fight against the evil of the world. If a truly Christian civilization ever comes down out of heaven from

God, beautiful as a bride adorned for her husband, it will result not so much from the work of the major-generals who write great books, preach eloquent sermons, and organize wide reforms. All this may have a certain value, but the victory will be won at last because the masses of ordinary, everyday Christians have kept step, marched in close rank, fighting bravely under the banner of Christ until every evil has been trampled in the dust.

In the last book of the Bible these plain people are called "the One Hundred and Forty-four Thousand." No one knows the name of a single one of them. It is not stated that any of them had done anything picturesque. But in the day of moral triumph when they passed in review, there was "a voice from heaven like the sound of many waters." "The harpers were harping with their harps" and the angels of God were singing a new song. "And no one could learn that song," the record says, or share in it, "save the One Hundred and Forty-four Thousand nameless people who had been redeemed from the earth."

The world is steadily advanced in its main in-

terests by people who do not stand at either extreme. They are not shouting their brilliant successes through the streets in hilarious fashion. They are not bewailing their failures in hopeless despair. They do not "look always on the bright side" nor always on the dark side. Like sensible people, they look at both sides. They balance up the debits and the credits, the losses and the gains. And then, persuaded that life is good when it is lived aright, that all things work together for good in the final outcome when we face in the right direction, they carry on in the fulfilment of the divine purpose. They move ahead, showing the spirit of the Master in the shop and in the store, at school and at home, in the street and in the field, until at last the glory of a renewed life shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

All honor then to the average man who finds in the common round of daily duty full opportunity for the exercise of his best powers at their best. Whatsoever his hand or his head, his heart or his soul finds to do, he does it with his might, thoroughly and well, for the glory of God and for the common good.

This is what Principal Jacks in his recent book on "Constructive Citizenship" so aptly calls "the industrial version of morality." The finer quality of life which is not limited to the fringes and accessories of human experience but is bound up directly with the day's work! And is there anything finer on earth than that steady fidelity in facing the common tasks with such ability as we have? The temperate zones are the great productive zones. Not the fierce, biting cold of the Arctic nor the torrid heat of the tropics, with all their luxurious vegetation, has any such contribution to make to human well-being as those temperate zones where the wide fields of good grain ripen into bread to satisfy the hunger of the race.

President Eliot of Harvard used to relate this occurrence, which came to his notice when he was a summer resident at North East Harbor. Early one February morning, the wife of a lighthouse keeper on a rocky promontory off the Maine coast awoke to find the wind blowing a gale. She heard the waves pounding on the rocks. The moment it grew light enough to see, she got up and looked out of the window. To her horror she saw a small schooner on the reef—wrecked in the storm. One

mast had fallen over the side and three men were lashed to the other mast. They were alive, for she could see them move.

Her husband lay there sound asleep. Should she waken him? If she did, she felt sure that he would take the lifeboat and go out into that terrible sea to try to rescue those three men. If she waited only a little while, the men would either be washed off or be frozen to death, and there would be no need of his going. He had always been a faithful, affectionate husband and it seemed wrong for him to risk his life on a forlorn hope.

She wakened him. He went out and, after a frightful struggle with the sea, he finally succeeded in bringing off all three men alive. And I suppose those two plain people got more satisfaction for the rest of their days in talking over the experiences of that forenoon than many a millionaire has gotten out of all his money. The lighthouse keeper was neither rich nor poor, neither a scholar nor a dunce, neither a finished saint nor a scoundrel. He was just an average man with two good arms, a clear head and a brave heart. And he so invested his two talents of ability as to bring added honor to his whole craft.

When the ordinary tasks are well done, men double their powers. It was so in the parable—"He that had received two talents gained two talents more." He became just twice the man he had been. The brilliant man with the five talents made no better showing. "Lord, thou gavest me five talents—behold, I have gained five more." He too had just doubled his ability. It is just as fine to move up from two to four as to move up from five to ten. It is not the size of the final showing which counts, so much as the fidelity and competence each man displays in using what he has. What an inscription to write upon the monument of the average man! "He received two talents and he gained other two." It would be honor enough for any man.

Many years ago I read a sentence from Senator George F. Hoar of Massachusetts which stuck in my mind. He was a scholar as well as a statesman. He was a man of wide culture and a public speaker of unusual power. He never indulged, however, in flights of what the newspapers call "oratory." This was the sentence: "The longer I live and the more I hear of public utterance, the more confidence I

have in the eloquence of simple, accurate, honest statement."

And that lies within the reach of almost any intelligent man. There are thousands of men who might become interesting and effective speakers, if they were only willing to keep their feet on the ground, avoid the use of big words and speak straight home to the minds and hearts of their fellows. It was said of One who spake as never man spake, "The common people heard him gladly." "The rulers" did not care for him—they insisted that his teaching was "not deep enough" for them. But "the common people heard him gladly"—it was high praise. And all the ages since have put the stamp of their approval upon the verdict of the common people.

"Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all workers of miracles? Do all speak with tongues?" By no means! It never has been so. It never will be so. Yet thousands upon thousands of these plain people are walking in what the great apostle called —in that same connection—"a more excellent way." They do not speak with the tongues of men and of angels; they do not understand all mysteries

and all knowledge; they cannot exercise a faith that would move mountains. But in the daily round, they have caught the spirit of an intelligent good will. They show that love which can "suffer long and be kind." They can act the part of unselfishness and not get "puffed up." They have that spirit of Christian fidelity which "never faileth." And that is indeed "a more excellent way."

How reassuring it all is! How prophetic of the ultimate triumph of goodness! The mightiest moral movements we know anything about have come when the hearts of the plain people were filled with a passion for righteousness. They were highly resolved that better methods of thought, of feeling and of action must prevail. And they became simply irresistible.

"The tabernacle of God is with men,"—with those ordinary, everyday men who are set upon the doing of his will. He is functioning through their lives. He is resident and powerful in their activities. He is manifesting himself in all their better impulses. He is using those men to build a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. And when any man is true to that divine

impulse in his own heart, he doubles his capacity for good. He that received two talents gained other two.

When the Armistice was signed in the fall of 1918 and the boys began to come home, there was a magnificent military parade on Fifth Avenue, New York. The great buildings which line that splendid street were gay with bunting and banners of victory from Washington Square clear up to Central Park and beyond. The people gathered from far and near, hundreds of thousands of them. They were eager to see General Pershing, General Harbord, and the other generals whose names had become household words all over the land. When any one of those men appeared, the crowds went wild. They shouted their glad acclaim until the whole city rang with joy.

But there was something more impressive than all that, something which touched the hearts of the people at a deeper level. When the famous leaders had all passed, there came the tramp and tread of the common soldiers. Here were the men who did not go on horseback or in high-powered cars. They walked. They wore brass hats. They ate the common fare and slept on the ground. They fought in

the trenches, and at the word of command they went over the top. They kept right on doing those things until the victory was won and the war was over.

The people did not know their names. They could not always see the letters on the flag. It might be a regiment from Maine or from Mississippi, from Connecticut or from California. No matter! They were all "our boys." There had been loud cheers for the generals. But now the crowds grew strangely quiet and there were silent, sacred tears of appreciation and gratitude for the rank and file, for the common soldiers who had done their duty and put it through.

"Ye know that among the Gentiles, the great ones exercise lordship and dominion; and they that would be great, have authority. It shall not be so among you. If any man would be great among you, let him serve. The greatest of all is the servant of all, even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life."

We cannot all be major-generals and ride at the head of the procession. We cannot all have five talents each of spiritual capacity. But there

is no life here, or anywhere else, which may not catch the spirit of service and march under the banner of Christ and share in the final triumph of the cause of Christ. God help us so to live that our names may be written in the Book of Life and that the Lord of heaven and earth may exult when he sees us pass in the grand review!

CHAPTER V

BRAIN AND BRAWN

THE president of one of our great American universities had been teaching his boy Bible stories. He was an expert scholar, well versed in the Scriptures. He had made a profound impression upon the boy's mind with these stirring narratives, and at the end of two years' study, he said to the boy one day, "Benjamin, when you get to heaven, what Bible character would you most like to see?" He was prepared to find that Joseph with his romantic career, or David making his way up from the sheepfold to the throne, or possibly the Master himself coming out of a carpenter's shop to take the moral government of the world upon his shoulder, had made the strongest appeal. But to his amazement, the ten-year-old promptly answered, "Goliath."

Hero worship has its hour with us all. There is a time when physical prowess in battle, or on the

athletic field, or it may be in the prize ring, makes potent appeal. The story of that duel between the stripling with his sling and stone and the huge giant from Gath never fails to enlist the eager interest of youngsters—and it is not without fascination for their elders. Notice the implications of that scene as they bear upon conditions which we face at this very hour.

Here on one side was brute force! Brute force at its best, according to the standards of that early day! The Philistines and the Israelites were drawn up in battle array on the opposite sides of the valley. The enemy's champion was the giant named Goliath. He was a huge fellow, nine feet tall. He wore a coat of mail weighing one hundred and fifty pounds, "and his spear was like a weaver's beam." After the manner of those contests recorded in Homer's Iliad, the Philistines were ready to let the issue of the campaign turn upon the result of a solitary combat between Goliath and any Israelite who might be put up against him. Morning after morning for a period of six weeks, the huge fellow came out and defied the armies of Israel. "Give me a man," he cried, "that we may fight. If he is able to kill me, we will be

your servants; but if I prevail against him, ye shall be our servants."

When the Israelites heard those words they were sore afraid. Day after day this wager of battle was given, and the sense of humiliation sat heavy upon their souls. No man among them dared to cross swords with that enemy of their country's peace. An uncircumcised Philistine was defying the armies of the living God.

The king had offered to any soldier who would fight the man and win, a handsome bit of prize money, freedom from taxation for his father's house, and the hand of his own daughter, the young princess, in marriage. Still there was no response. Brute force was successfully defying all those higher values for which the Hebrew nation was supposed to stand.

At last there came a day when on the other side of the valley a young man stood forth who represented intelligence, skill, and moral purpose. David the stripling had come down to bring some extra rations to his brothers at the front and to bring back to his father news of the campaign. When he saw the humiliation of Israel's army, he

said to the king: "Let no man's heart fail because of him. Thy servant will fight the Philistine."

Then the king rebuked him. "Thou are not able to go. Thou art but a youth and he is a man of war." But the young man had been rehearsing for the more serious struggles which lay ahead, in his combats with the wild beasts which attacked his father's flocks on the plains of Bethlehem. "The Lord who delivered me from the lion and the bear will deliver me from the hands of this Philistine." His rough-and-tumble experiences with the wild beasts had provided him the necessary training.

He refused the king's armor which was offered him. "I cannot go with these," he said, "for I have not proved them." He would fight only with the weapons that he knew. He was left-handed, we are told, and he had learned to "sling stones at a hair's breadth and not miss." Out of his own experience he chose those weapons which he had found effective in the preliminary skirmishes of his boyhood. He chose five smooth stones from the brook and with his sling in his hand and his shepherd's crook on his arm, he was ready to take the field.

The opposing armies were drawn up on the slopes of a natural amphitheater to witness the

outcome of this strange combat. When the Philistine saw David coming he was enraged. "Am I a dog," he cried, "that thou comest to me with a club?" He cursed David by all his gods and threatened to give his flesh to the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field. Like some of the modern advocates of brute force, Goliath was mighty with his mouth. His tongue also was like a weaver's beam, and he had been smiting those poor Israelites with his words of insult.

The young man was undismayed—his weapons had been taken from the arsenal of experience and his courage came from the same reliable source. He flung back his challenge. "Thou comest to me with sword and spear—I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts whom thou hast defied. The Lord that delivered me from the lion and the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."

The moral triumphs of the boy as he wins out over temptation are the harbinger of the greater triumphs of mature manhood. The boy who refuses to lie or to cheat, to stoop to uncleanness or to show himself a coward, knows how to bear himself when the hard tests of middle life assail him. David's faith also added to his courage. His trust in God

kept his heart strong and his nerves steady so that even in the presence of that roaring giant, he was still "able to sling stones at a hair's breadth and not miss."

The victory was won by those spiritual forces which are always the final forces. The scornful self-confidence of Goliath trusting in his coat of armor and his arm of flesh were opposed by the finer valor which belongs to the spirit of faith. The huge Philistine came on brandishing his spear and roaring out his wrath. David saw at a glance the unprotected spot below the visor of his helmet. He took one of those five smooth stones and slung it with such force and precision that it struck Goliath in the forehead and knocked him senseless.

Then he ran swiftly forward and took the Philistine's sword and cut off his head, holding it aloft in the eyes of Israel as a trophy. The Philistines, dismayed by the fall of their chief, fled in sudden fear and the men of Israel fell upon them and won a notable victory. Thus reproach was lifted from the armies of the living God.

It was brute force pitted that day against intelligence and skill and moral faith. To the outer eye it may have seemed a most unequal contest. Napo-

leon once said with a sneer. "I have noticed that God is always on the side of the heaviest battalions!" Then in Russia, at Waterloo and at St. Helena, Napoleon lived to see that he had misjudged God.

Confidence in the justice of one's cause and faith in the living God produce a morale which will finally wear down and wear out all the aggregations of blind, brute force that can be brought against it. To the eye of insight that day when David brought into the conflict against Goliath those unseen energies which are "mighty through God" to the casting down of the strongholds of evil, victory rested already upon the banners of that finer strength which is from above.

In the last analysis "the battle is the Lord's and he saveth not alone with spear and sword." There are certain sentiments and principles deep-rooted in a nation's life, which in the march of events show themselves mightier than warships and battalions. There are devotions and enthusiasms which outwear the most superb collections of munitions and equipment. There are habits of thought and ideals which constitute a more reliable defense of a nation's honor than all the fortifications ever devised

by the mind of man. The battle is the Lord's! "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

The unthinking world, strong in the consciousness of its own carnal might, often faces with contempt the slender equipment and modest resources of the church of Christ. "What would these feeble Christians do?" it says, as a certain Pagan leader said when he saw the walls of a ruined city being rebuilt under the leadership of a man of God. What would these feeble Christians do? The thought that any deliverance can come from those unseen spiritual forces for which the church of Christ stands seems to it all but ludicrous.

Let no Christian be dismayed! The battle is the Lord's and they that be with us are more and mightier than they that be with them. Let the forces of righteousness stand ready as Jesus did to stake the future of their cause upon the power of instruction and persuasion, upon the power of spiritual appeal and right example. If they are only faithful, they too will see that this whole mode of life for which Goliath stands will bite the dust.

We are facing to-day the very same situation which Israel faced. Here are problems innumerable which cannot be solved and questions which cannot be settled, with those weapons which are taken from the arsenal and the navy yard! Here are needs on every hand which cannot be met with the contents of the wheat bin or the coal bin! They are needs of another sort and help must come from a source unseen.

The church of God which receives a company of people who come to it on Sunday morning confused and discouraged, depleted in strength and depressed at heart, has its work cut out and laid ready to its hand. If it can lift them to that higher level of thought and feeling where they are wrought upon by energies unseen, sending them back to the work of the week heartened, renewed, enriched, sweetened, it has done something worthy of any set of human powers at their best. They that wait upon the Lord renew their strength. Their aspirations mount up with wings like eagles. Their moral determinations run in the way of the divine command and do not grow weary. And, best of all, as the very climax of that process of spiritual renewal, their habits of action walk the weary

round of daily duty and do not faint. All that is achieved by religious faith, for the battle is the Lord's.

All these mighty aggregations of capital, all these political devices of ours, all the machinery and materials of what we call "modern civilization," are at best only tools. They have no magical quality in them, giving them the power of life and death. Whether they make for human well-being or for human injury, depends upon the quality of the spiritual forces which wield those tools. In the hands of intelligence, skill, and moral purpose, they can win victories for human betterment which will cause every heart to leap. In the hands of greed and of selfish aggression, they work havoc to all the higher human values. I wonder if in our methods of education and our national culture, in our industrial systems and our vocational training, we have not been giving too much attention to the sharpening and polishing of our tools and too little attention to the development of those qualities of mind and heart which would wield these tools aright.

The voice of God is calling to human society in these days of moral testing, in these days when we

are trying out the courage and strength of spiritual forces as opposed to the weight and bulk of things material: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Every valley shall be exalted and every hill shall be brought low. The crooked shall be made straight and the rough places smooth, that the glory of God may be revealed." It is David against Goliath; and now as then the battle is the Lord's. "Be strong then and of a good courage. The Lord thy God he it is that goeth with thee. He will not fail thee nor forsake thee."

In this hard fight for social renewal, we may well bear in mind those wise words of the British Labour party which sounded forth as a clarion call, bringing cheer to many a discouraged heart. "If we are to escape from the decay of civilization itself, we must build a new social order based not on fighting but on fraternity; not on the competitive struggle for the bare means of life but upon coöperation in production and distribution for the benefit of all who participate by hand or by brain; not upon enforced domination over subject nations, subject races, subject classes, or a subject sex, but upon that equal freedom, consent, and

participation in power, which is characteristic of democracy." Have we not all one Father in heaven, one common inheritance of human interest on earth and one possible destiny as the goal of the highest effort we can put forth?

Are we going back or are we going on? Are we to resume those old material ambitions which ruled so many lives before the Great War, or shall we replace them with a mode of life at once more rational and more moral? This is the question before the house—the march of events has made it the order of the day. Is it Goliath, or is it David, who is set to win?

God is not mocked. Whatsoever human society sows in its prevailing ambitions, it reaps. If it sows mainly to the flesh, it will reap corruption. What our own country needs to-day above all else is not more money or more oil or more munitions. It is not a fresh supply of mental cleverness or a more elaborate display of Acts of Congress. Our country's greatest need to-day is to learn afresh the meaning of that ancient word of God, "Not by might nor by force but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts," do men and nations achieve their well-being.

The question is being asked right out loud in the parliaments of men and in the counting-rooms of commerce, in the academies of learning, in the halls of labor unions and on the street corners: can the spiritual forces of human society be maintained and made victorious in the face of such success as the Central Powers showed along military lines or in the face of such success as the United States of America has shown in material accumulation?

It is for us as Christians to help this generation to make reply with an undaunted affirmative. Goliath cannot help. Goliath must be driven back. Not by material efficiency nor by unhallowed knowledge is the world to be saved. When we look for the One who is to save the world from its pain and shame, from the blight and mildew of a sordid materialism, we find that his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

CHAPTER VI

WHAT JONAH DID

TAKE another look at Jonah! It is almost tragic that one of the noblest of the shorter books in the Bible should be known chiefly for its reference to a whale. And the whale only appears in two short verses of that book—he did not have one of the leading rôles. He was scarcely more than a bit of stage setting in that drama of disobedience. Yet for some reason Jonah and the whale are always named together, like David and Jonathan or Romeo and Juliet.

The little book was never meant to be history. If the author of it were alive to-day, he would be amazed and amused by the fact that men, lacking in the sense of humor and in the sense of perspective, still argue themselves hoarse over the question as to whether any whale would have a mouth large enough to swallow a man alive, and over the further question as to whether a man

could live for three days in the inside of a whale and there compose a poetical prayer, as this man is said to have done. Foolish arguments against the possibility of such an occurrence have been met by other arguments still more foolish to prove that God, being omnipotent, can do anything he likes.

The book of Jonah is a sermon cast in the form of a parable, like the Parable of the Prodigal Son or the Parable of the Good Samaritan. It stands here in the Bible not among the historical books but among the "Minor Prophets," which are made up of fragments of sermons.

This is the story. "The word of the Lord," one of those commanding spiritual impulses, came to Jonah saying, "Go to Nineveh and call upon the people to forsake their evil-doing."

But Jonah did not want to go. He was a Jew and the Ninevites were Gentiles. Jews had no dealings with Gentiles. "The Ninevites can go to the bad for all I care," Jonah may have said to himself—he felt that they were on the way. Nineveh was to the east—he turned his back upon duty and started west on a ship bound for Tarshish, which was in Spain.

Then there came a frightful storm and the

sailors feared that their ship was going down. "They cried every man to his god." They felt that the god of the sea was angry with them for some reason, and they wanted a human scapegoat to be offered to that angry deity. They cast lots to see who should be "it." By some skilful manipulation, it may be, the lot fell upon Jonah. The sailors promptly threw him overboard, and at once "the sea ceased from its roaring." The storm was over. Apparently the god of the sea was satisfied with the offering they had made, and troubled them no more.

But the Lord had mercy on this disobedient prophet. He prepared a great fish to swallow him and this kept him from being drowned. There in the belly of the whale, Jonah repented of his weakness in running away from his duty and prayed forgiveness. The Lord heard his prayer and at the end of three days the whale spit Jonah out on dry land.

Then he went straight to Nineveh and called upon the wicked to forsake their ways and the unrighteous men their thoughts, and turn to the Lord. The whole city, from the king to the scavenger, the story says, was converted. The king laid aside

his purple and clothed himself in sackcloth and ashes, asking forgiveness for his sins. So the fierce anger of Jonah's deity was changed into merciful forgiveness.

Now that is not history—it was never meant to be. Entire cities are not converted to righteousness in that wholesale fashion. But it is good preaching—"He spake many things to us in parables."

Here is the teaching of that splendid parable! When a man runs away from his duty, he gets into trouble. The trouble is here portrayed according to a certain habit of mind. The ancient Hebrews were afraid of the sea. They were land animals—they developed no maritime commerce as did their neighbors the Phenicians. In the Hebrew vision of Paradise in the last book of the Bible, we read, "There was no more sea." In that "new heaven and new earth wherein dwelt righteousness," there was no salt water. If the sailors of that day had really believed it, they would not have wanted to go there—it would not have been heaven for them with no salt water in sight. But that was the way the Hebrews felt about it, and for the disobedient

Jonah to be cast overboard into a raging sea was a terrible fate.

Now that principle is just as true to-day as it ever was. When any man, anywhere, runs away from his duty, he finds himself in trouble. Sometimes right off, sometimes later—the Lord does not settle all of his accounts every Saturday night or at the end of each month. He never forgets anything, however. Sometimes the trouble takes one form, sometimes another—"the chariots of the Lord," which ride men down when they are doing wrong, "are twenty thousand." He has all kinds of ways to combat evil-doing.

We are caught and held in the grip of a great moral order from which there is no more escape than there is from the power of gravitation. Whenever we get off the rails, we get hurt. Any man who turns his back on Nineveh, which represents duty, and sails for Tarshish, which represents disobedience, is in for trouble.

In the second place, when a man is sorry for his wrong-doing and is ready to do better, he finds deliverance. It is not necessary to drag in all of those sea serpents and other monsters of the deep

with mouths wide enough to swallow a man alive, in order to make that truth plain. How funny men have been in getting wrought up over the size and habits of the fish in the Mediterranean—they have missed the whole point of the story!

This man in the parable cast his prayer for deliverance in poetical form. "The waters compassed me about and the billows went over me. My soul fainted within me until my prayer came unto thy holy temple. I said, I will offer unto thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving and I will pay that which I have vowed." His prayer was heard, and he was set upon his feet on solid ground where he could go straight for that neglected duty in the city of Nineveh.

How sound and true all that is! This is "the gospel according to Jonah," and in some of its features it is the same gospel that we find later in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Every man of us has turned aside from the right way and has followed too much the devices and desires of his own heart. We have done those things which we ought not to have done and we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and that is all there is about it. "If we say we have no sin,

we deceive ourselves. But if we confess our sins, He"—the God of Jonah and of John and of Jesus —"is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

"The highest moment in a man's career," Oscar Wilde wrote when he was in Reading jail for his own wretched wrong-doing, "may be the moment when he kneels in the dust and beats upon his breast and tells all the sins of his life." "God be merciful to me a sinner"—when a man utters that prayer sincerely, he is forgiven. When he is sorry for his wrong-doing (as Jonah was) and is ready to do better, he finds deliverance.

In the third place, God's mercies are universal. When this Jew went to Nineveh, his very presence there declared that "God had granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life," just as we find it set forth later in the book of Acts. It took a surgical operation and a sheet let down from heaven, full of all kinds of animals, to get that truth into Peter's head. He finally rose to it and said to Cornelius, the Roman centurion, "Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is

accepted of him. Thy prayers and thine alms are acceptable to God." But here was Jonah saying the same thing five hundred years, more or less, before Peter was born.

The timeliness of this great truth in that day is apparent. Israel was refusing her larger mission to the outside world. She was failing to function as a Messianic nation in whose unfolding life all the nations of earth should be blessed. She was becoming narrow, bigoted, selfish, intent on saving her own soul, letting the devil take Nineveh if he liked. And when Israel refused to do her duty, there came the exile to Babylon. Jeremiah, the leading prophet of that day, said that a great dragon had swallowed Israel up. You see at once the broad scope of this little book of Jonah. God's mercies, even in that far-off time, were not confined to the Jews.

The book teaches the universal love of God. "Go to Nineveh!" Go everywhere! Go into all the world and disciple the nations, baptizing them into the name of that Infinite Mercy which is above all! "God so loved," not the Israelites nor the Methodists nor the Episcopalians nor the "One Hundred per Cent Americans," as they like to call them-

selves—"God so loved the world," the whole of it, Nineveh, Calcutta, Shanghai as well as New York, London, and Rome, "that he gave his only begotten Son" to be the Lord and Savior of them all.

It was one of their limitations that some of the Jews learned to think of themselves quite as highly as they ought to have thought. "What nation hath statutes and judgments so righteous as this law? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have heard? Has God ever assayed to take him such a nation out of the midst of another nation, by signs, by wonders and by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm? What nation hath God so nigh unto them as the Lord our God unto us in all things that we call upon him for?" They were on exceedingly good terms with themselves. And there are others—the people of the United States of America, for example, in the days of their unparalleled material prosperity.

There is peril as well as privilege in feeling that one's own country is a nation favored of heaven. Unless our advantages are held in trust, unless we regard ourselves as good stewards of the mercies of God for the service of interests wider than our

own well-being, we too are in danger. If we become like that hated Pharisee, thanking God that we are not as other nations are, we shall go down to our houses unblest. The nation that plumes itself upon its superiority loses out.

It is only by the wise investment of one's best in unselfish action that any man or any nation can rise. It is the duty of the church of God not to stand aloof, pleased with its reverent worship and its spiritual culture—it too must concern itself with Nineveh and Babylon. It must insist that *all* the activities of this world, not merely worship and charity but business and politics, education, recreation, and all the rest, shall become kingdoms of our God, ruled by the spirit that was in Christ.

Finally, Jonah had a further lesson to learn about "follow-up work." Nineveh was a great city, sixty miles in circumference. It was spread out widely like London, or Los Angeles, which bids fair to annex all the outlying territory in southern California. In that city of Nineveh there were one hundred and twenty thousand children, not old enough to know the difference between their

right hands and their left. This meant a population of a million or more. In all that teeming multitude not a single individual is called by name or described as possessed of any particular distinction. It was "the mute appeal of those monotonous crowds of plain people" which moved the Lord to send them a prophet with a message of help.

But even his experience in the sea had not transformed Jonah into a worthy messenger of the Most High. He still had in his heart an ugly remnant of contempt for foreigners. He approached that needy city denouncing it for its evil-doing. "Forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed," he said. Then he stood off watching the sky and waiting for the fire and brimstone to burn them up. But it did not come.

Then this man, who was never quite large enough for his job, became vexed. This far-reaching "executive clemency" of the Lord seemed to discredit him as a prophet of disaster. The fact that the Lord had shown himself merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in kindness, seemed to give the lie to the red-hot message of condemnation which Jonah had delivered. Forty days and Nineveh was *not* destroyed, because the people had

repented of their evil doings and had been forgiven. Then the angry prophet flung himself upon the ground and wished that he might die.

There is a delicate bit of humor in the quiet reproof which the Lord gave him in that hour. "Doest thou well to be angry?" Why so hot, little man? Are you disappointed because your preaching has been so effective that all the people in the city have turned from their evil ways? Are you vexed because it seems too good to be true?

"The love of God is broader than the measure of man's mind and the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind." Gentiles though they were, God had shown himself able to release them from the mastery of evil. Why was not this man on his feet singing a Te Deum? By that further parable of the gourd, which grew up almost in a night to shield the tired prophet from the heat of the sun, the Lord taught him the beauty of compassion.

The quality of mercy is not strained,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blessed;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown;
. . . . . .

> . . . we do pray for mercy;
> And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
> The deeds of mercy.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

Read that book of Jonah again! Forget all about the great fish. It was never meant to hold the center of the stage. It is only a bit of furniture in the background of that scene in the drama of redemption. When "Macbeth" is being played, how foolish men would be to fall into an angry discussion about some bit of bric-à brac in the castle at Inverness and forget the tragedy of that crime committed by a guilty man and a guilty woman against their guest, against their king, against their God!

Study here "the goodness and the severity of God." To those who persist in disobedience to his gracious purpose, severity; but to those who are penitent and willing to do better, a merciful redemption which saves even unto the uttermost all those who put their trust in him. That is the message of the book of Jonah.

CHAPTER VII

UNNOTED GAINS AND LOSSES

THE cash book is not the most important book on the premises. There is a whole system of values which are never entered there. They cannot be stated in dollars and cents, nor taken off in a trial balance, yet they make men or they break men. Some of them are assets, some of them liabilities. And when the debits and credits are reckoned up according to this more accurate system of bookkeeping, every man sees at a glance whether he is solvent or bankrupt.

In the book of Exodus there was a man who lived to do the will of God—he made a business of it. He comes upon the scene young, strong, well educated, with a good social position, but concerned mainly with fighting the battles of the poor. He was leading a race of slaves out of the bondage of Egypt into the freedom and opportunity of the land of promise. When they needed laws, institu-

tions, and a God to worship, he went to the top of Sinai and stayed there until he had seen spiritual reality face to face. He came down the mountain side with the transcript of that experience written on tablets of stone and with the glory of it shining in his very countenance.

He was doing something high, fine, lasting. It was a man's job and he brought to it the best he had. He stood virtually at the head of a new Hebrew commonwealth in whose unfolding life all the nations of the earth would be blessed. When men saw him, there was a certain radiant look about him which awed them. "The skin of his face shone," the record says. He was not aware of it—that was the beauty of it. If he had been thinking about it, it would not have shone. If he had been saying to himself, "What a wonderful man I am!" the radiance would have vanished instantly. He had lost all thought of himself in the joy of doing his bit in the service of a needy people and "he wist not that his face shone." It was one of the unnoted gains in life.

In the book of Judges there is a man of another type. This man also came upon the scene strong,

joyous, full of promise. He was as handsome as a young Apollo. He was an athlete, able to carry off the gates of a city if he chose. He was the child of prayer, the son of godly parents who coveted for him an honorable career. He was chosen of God to be "a judge in Israel," a leader of his nation. The path to honor and usefulness lay open before him.

But just at that time he met a young woman who was a Philistine. She worshiped strange gods and had no more moral sense than a rat. She was beautiful, and when young Samson was with her he felt that he was in the Garden of Eden. He laid his head in the lap of the sensual indulgence she offered until he was no longer fit to be a leader of men. His strength was gone and he was only an empty shell of the man he might have been. "And Samson wist not that the Lord had departed from him." Here was one of the unnoted losses in life.

The subtle processes of waste and of repair are going on all the while in the physical realm. There is the breaking down of tissue by fatigue or by disease. There is the building up of tissue by the vital processes of digestion and assimilation. So

long as the friends of life are more than a match for its foes, we move ahead in health and strength.

The same thing is true in the moral realm, where men are conscious of the difference between right and wrong, between selfishness and service. Here is one man strengthened with might by God's spirit in his inner life. He is built up by faith and hope and love. He is setting his life structure on a foundation of solid rock. Here is another man whose moral fiber is being eaten away by spiritual indifference and sloth. His finer faculties are being atrophied by disuse. He is putting all that he has into a house which rests upon the sand. And in either case the man may be so absorbed in the good or the evil which has enlisted his interest, as to be unaware of what is taking place. "Moses wist not that his face shone," while "Samson wist not that the Lord had departed from him."

The gains and the losses come mainly by indirection. Many a man shows a noble unconsciousness of the spiritual progress he is making. He has caught the method of Jesus—"he that saves his life loses it." The man who is forever thinking

about saving his soul, petting it, coddling it, putting it through its pious paces, becomes a moral prig, a spiritual snob. He is doomed to defeat.

The man who loses his life in the right way—"for His sake"—finds it. He saves his soul by investing it, putting it into a worthy line of endeavor, leaving the result to his Maker. His face shines with a certain radiance—he does not know it because he is intent upon doing in sturdy fashion a piece of honest service. It is the method of indirection.

You may think of some young man who has no thought of going to the bad. If you were to tell him that he is headed straight for destruction, he would be amazed. He is simply intent on having a good time. But his conception of "a good time" may show scant regard for the aspirations of those who bore him. It may show a careless contempt for the interests of those weaker lives which he uses, and uses up, for his own selfish gratification. He may flaunt all the ideals and aspirations which fill the sky of finer men. He goes the pace; he hits the high places; he travels the primrose path with no other thought than that he is showing himself "a jolly good fellow." But when you make care-

ful assay of his actual contents, you find scarcely a trace of that fine gold which we call manhood. He has lost his life without realizing it.

Here was this man Samson! In his youth he was a full-page illustration of joyous strength. When he moved down the street, it was like a band of music. But he gave himself to a life of loose indulgence. He forgot that wrong-doing puts out a man's eyes, eats away his moral fiber, enslaves his will. When his fever had run its course, we read that "the Philistines took him." He had seen the day when he could slay those enemies of his country's peace "in heaps, with the jawbone of an ass." Now they took him and dragged him off, a weak, blind slave, to grind their grists in a prison house. He did not realize that the Lord had departed from him.

How many people suffer from spiritual dry rot! It does not show as yet on the surface of their lives. They are not in the hands of the policeman or in danger of open scandal. But within there is a deadly process of moral degeneration going on night and day. The tragedy of it is that many of them do not seem to realize the gravity of it. If you neglect your teeth, they speak out. They will

not let you eat nor sleep—they send you post-haste to the dentist. But a man's soul may be perishing within him by inches or by yards, and the fact pass unnoticed. "Samson wist not that the Lord had departed from him," and that all the former glory of his life was gone.

The silent, ceaseless operations of the spirit were noted by One who knew what he was talking about. "The kingdom of heaven is like a man casting seed into the ground"—it may be wheat or it may be tares. "He sleeps and rises and the seed springs up and grows he knows not how." Some sort of harvest is on the way and God is not mocked. He does not ordain these laws of right and wrong that men may laugh them to scorn. Whether a man hears or forbears, believes or doubts, takes heed or rebels, the mills of the gods are grinding out the inevitable grist. And many there be who go their way all unaware of the mighty issues which turn upon their actions. The gains and the losses come mainly by indirection.

In the second place, days of judgment are coming all the while. Men sometimes speak of "the Day of Judgment," as if it were a single event in

the distant future like the 31st of December, 2976 A. D.

Every day is judgment day. The sheep and the goats are being set off on the right hand and the left all the time by the presence of the spirit of the Son of Man among us. Some people are entering into the joy of their Lord, into all the high privileges of human existence, while others are being sent away into darkness and dishonor by their own unfitness. Heaven is here and hell is here as states of being. The moral elevator is constantly moving up and down, carrying men up or carrying them down as they are headed right or headed wrong.

Now and then there may come a climax in this process of judgment. "The day shall declare it," Paul says—some special day of testing. I was living in California when the San Francisco earthquake came on the eighteenth day of April, 1906. It was the day of judgment for the architecture of that whole region. The forty-eight seconds, when the ground beneath our feet trembled like a leaf in the wind, drew a sharp line between the buildings which were built right and those which were built wrong.

When David Starr Jordan looked out upon the work of destruction on his own campus at Stanford University, he said to me one day: "We should not complain. Nothing came down which ought not to have come down. The buildings which fell were not built right in the first place." The buildings which were built according to the original plans of Richardson the architect and under the supervision of Leland Stanford himself, all stood unhurt. "The day shall declare it."

These days of judgment bring out the kind of character building which has been done. Judas Iscariot had been a rascal for some time before he sold himself for thirty pieces of silver. Benedict Arnold had been jealous for months when other officers in the American army were promoted over his head because of his many frauds. When he was sentenced by court-martial to be reprimanded by General Washington, he never paused in his downward career until, a traitor to his country, he had plotted to betray the fortress at West Point. The character begins to crumble and then some day of disappointment brings the tragic outcome.

The same experience, with a very different result came once in the life of the elder James Gor-

don Bennett. The oily agent of a corrupt ring entered his private room at the *New York Herald* office and said to him: "We would like to have the influence of the *Herald* in putting this scheme across and we are prepared to show our appreciation. Here are five thousand dollars in currency, so that there will be no embarrassing checks for you to sign. I will leave it for you."

Then the wrath of the elder Bennett blazed forth. He seized the roll of bills, flung them in the man's face and said to him, "Get out of my office, you scoundrel, before I kick you out, and never show your face here again." James Gordon Bennett had been storing up sound moral tissue in those days when journalism stood higher than it does to-day, and his rugged honesty scorned a bribe. The hour of temptation shows what a man really is at heart.

Every month some community is shocked by the downfall of some one who has hitherto borne a good name. Some banker or public official has defaulted. Some man supposedly decent breaks up a home by an unclean escapade. Some citizen whose integrity has been taken for granted finds himself in the moral dust heap.

Such occurrences are not the work of a day.

When the truth is known, it is perfectly plain that the man in question has been putting faulty material into his inner life for a long time. When a day of stress comes, he goes down with a crash. The patient years bring in their verdict at the last. Because of his life of integrity, Moses' face shone with radiant honesty, while poor Samson, as the result of his life of dissipation, found that the Lord had departed from him, leaving him a moral derelict.

In the third place, the only life which stands the test is the life built in harmony with the will of God. The petty little maxims of expediency by which some people try to order their lives are as lath and plaster where there should be quartered oak. "Safety first!" "The end justifies the means!" "Honesty is the best policy!" "In Rome do as the Romans do!" They leave the best elements in a man's life all unorganized and unsupported. When a man's purposes are set in concrete, because of his sense of agreement with the will of God, his life shows symmetry and strength, whatever storms may blow.

God give us men! A time like this demands
Strong minds, sound hearts, true faith and ready hands.
Men whom the lust of office does not kill,
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy,
Men who possess convictions and a will.
God give us men.

Here lay the difference between the two men named. Moses knew the deeper source of motive and stimulus. He could go alone and feel himself with God. He had been called to a life of service by that voice which spake out of the bush which burned with fire. "I have seen the affliction of my people in Egypt. I have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters. I know their sorrows. I have come to deliver them. Come now, I will send thee unto Pharaoh that thou mayst bring them out." He had also stood at Sinai seeing spiritual reality face to face. It was that sense of relatedness to the divine purpose which caused his face to shine.

The other man, because of his careless, sensual life, had allowed himself to become worldly, secular, animal. He lived by moods and whims. He steered his course with no chart nor compass save the motions of his own appetite. There was no sense of divine impact upon his soul. Therefore,

when temptation assailed him, he went down like a house of cards and "the Philistines took him." He wist not that the Lord had departed from him—he lacked that support and reinforcement which comes from a confiding sense of agreement with the will of the Eternal.

Each life finds God by being true to the highest it sees in its own chosen field: and there in the place of supreme fidelity its power is hidden. The lawyer must keep faith with God in his passion for justice. The doctor should have a sense of fellowship with God in his regard for the sacredness of human life. The merchant should keep faith with God in the honest quality of the goods he offers. The engineer should keep faith with the moral order by building that which will stand in the day of testing. The artist keeps faith with God by spreading his colors on canvas in such a way as to make his lines true and his picture a thing of beauty.

Paul wrote one of his best letters when he was a prisoner, chained to a soldier of the Pretorian guard, in Rome. His eye ran over the various details of the man's equipment. "Put on the whole armor of God," he said to the Ephesians. "Have

your loins girt about with truth and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace! Have on the breastplate of righteousness. Take the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God." Thus equipped, they would be able to "stand in the evil day."

Each one of these separate items in the armor which he would have them wear was linked up with its spiritual equivalent. Faith and truth, righteousness and salvation, the word of God and the gospel of peace! When any man has in his own inner life these points of contact with the world of unseen agencies and values, he is sure to come off with his banners flying and his face shining.

CHAPTER VIII

TAKING AWAY SIN

AT the opening of the first Gospel we find ourselves in the wilderness of Judea. It is wild, rough country, a cheerless, treeless, barren region, bounded on one side by the Dead Sea, and shot through with dark ravines. There is no form nor comeliness in it. Yet, forbidding though it was, it held a prophet of righteousness who drew large congregations from all the surrounding country.

His name was John the Baptist and he was a preacher in a thousand. He was no time-serving, side-stepping parson. He had a way of speaking his mind. His sermons made up in vigor and frankness whatever they may have lacked in literary finish. When he saw before him men who had been preying on the weak and then making long prayers to square the account, he told them bluntly that they were "a generation of vipers." He warned them that it was high time for them "to flee from the wrath to come."

He spoke often of "a Coming One," a great religious leader whose ax would be laid at the root of every tree that bore bad fruit, whose fan was in his hand to purge the threshing floor of all the worthless chaff!

Then on a certain day the "Coming One" appeared. John recognized him instantly. "This is he!" he cried. "This is he of whom I spake!" "He must increase, while I must decrease." "I am not the Light—I came to bear witness of the Light. This is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." "I baptize you with water, he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Then on the day following, he added this further appraisal, this great prophetic word, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world."

Let me ask three questions about that statement: What did the Coming One do? How did he do it? How far is he able to do it now?

What did He do? He had no ax in his hand—John was mistaken about that. Jesus saw that there were better methods for reconstructing society than the ax method. He was gentleness personified.

He never tried to call down fire from heaven to burn up the wicked, as some red-hot reformers would like to do. He was as patient as the healing processes of nature. Yet the plain fact stands in the record like a city set on a hill, that he did take away men's sins. He was taking away the sin of the world. Not all at once—it cannot be done wholesale! He did it, here a little, there a little, in his work of moral recovery, until presently men were saying, "We never saw it in this fashion." They never had—no one ever had.

Here was one of his best known intimates, a warm-hearted, impulsive man whose name was Simon. He had his good points, but he lacked stability. His character was so uncertain that in the presence of temptation he often went down like a house of cards. Jesus gave him a new name. He called him "Peter"—*petros*, the same root as our word "petrify." It means "rock." At first whenever Jesus called him that, Simon blushed. "How little granite there is in my make-up!" he said to himself.

But presently, under the tuition of the Master, he began to develop moral backbone. He showed new signs of strength. It was not merely the new

name—though that helped—it was the fact that Jesus believed in him and the fact that he was living in daily fellowship with Christ. Jesus was taking away his sin of weakness and cowardice. The day came when Peter stood up there in Jerusalem and denounced the enemies of Christ who had put him to death on the cross, and preached a sermon which brought three thousand people into the kingdom of God. The leaven of moral renewal had been working in that man's nature and he was made strong.

Here was Zaccheus, chief among the publicans, and the richest man in Jericho. When Jesus visited Jericho, He invited himself to dinner with Zaccheus. We can form some idea as to what they talked about at table from what Zaccheus said when the meal was over: "Lord if I have taken anything from any man falsely"—he knew that he had—"I restore him fourfold; and the half of my goods I give to the poor." Here was open confession, which is good for the soul, and repentance and restitution and consecration and all the rest of it, in terms of action. "I restore—I give." He had been dishonest and stingy—he began to get up at the very spot where he had fallen down.

In the cornfield, it may be first the blade, then the ear, and then late in the fall, the full ripe corn. But in the case of this awakened man, we find roasting ears of moral renewal growing out of him the very day the seed was put in the ground. Jesus recognized that fact. "To-day salvation is come to this house. Zaccheus is a changed man. He is a son of Abraham, one of God's chosen instruments for good. The Son of Man came to seek and save that which is lost." He did it then and there—he took away the sin of Zaccheus and made an honest, generous man of him.

Here was that woman overtaken in her wrong-doing! The Pharisees dragged her into the presence of Jesus and reminded him that according to the stern law of Moses all such women should be stoned to death. Jesus showed himself master of the situation. He looked into their ugly, vindictive faces and said to them, "Let the man among you who has never done wrong in that way, cast the first stone."

They looked at him and they looked at one another. Not a man among them felt competent to lead off in the stoning. They stole out one by one until only the woman was left. A great sinner alone

with a Great Savior! "Where are the accusers?" the Master said. "Hath no man condemned thee?" "No man, Lord." "Neither do I. Go and sin no more."

It was both a command and an earnest of the new life he expected her to lead. He gave her his forgiveness, his blessing, and his confidence in the sincerity of her purpose to live that new life. And the woman went out with her head up and the peace of God in her heart, to walk straight. He had taken away her sin.

These are samples! He was doing that constantly. "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature." We say of a man, "He is in love." "He is in a rage." "He is in liquor." His mood, temper, disposition correspond to the condition in which he finds himself. When a man stands before Jesus Christ in reverent, obedient trust and in heartfelt devotion until he can be said to be "in Christ," he is a new creature. Old things are passed away, all things are become new and all things are of God." "The Spirit of the Lord shall come upon thee," according to the ancient promise, "and thou shalt be turned into another man." You will find those moral transformations shining out of these pages,

and they are of more worth than all burnt offerings and sacrifices, of more worth than all signs and wonders. The Lamb of God takes away men's sins.

How did he do it? It was all just as real as life itself. There was no "imputed guilt" or "imputed righteousness" according to some legal fiction. There was no artificial transfer of merit or of demerit where it did not belong. There was no tying of ripe fuit to a dead tree. "Make the tree good," Jesus said, "and the fruit will be good." The salvation which Christ provided was vital and human. It sprang from a certain relationship as intimate and personal as the marriage relation. You will find that very figure employed here in the New Testament. The Church of redeemed people is called "the bride of Christ." Its members stood in that personal relation to the Head of the Church—they felt their sense of union with him.

"Behold the Lamb of God!" John did not say: "Behold some legal arrangement whereby men may be accounted righteous when they are not! Behold some new and finer system of ethics to be followed! Behold some loftier ideal, some lovelier example to be copied! Behold a more heroic moral

leader to march at the head of the column!" No one of these would ever have redeemed a sinful world. If that were all, John might as well have saved his breath. It was no mere gospel of instruction or of culture or of imitation which he proclaimed. It was a gospel of redemption. It meant the release, the recovery, the renewal of all that is highest and finest in human nature. "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

This gospel of redemption has often been misunderstood. It may easily contain mysteries which human intelligence has not yet fathomed. The final philosophy of it may baffle our minds. But the experience is sure—He saves people from their sins. That we know—we have seen it done.

And that is the natural order everywhere—the experience first, and the philosophy of it later. The little child learns to speak and to speak correctly, if he is in a home of intelligence, long before he knows the reason why through his study of the rules of grammar. He learns to love and to enjoy the flowers long before he knows anything about the manner of their growth through his knowledge of botany. He goes out to play in the sunshine,

blessed and benefited beyond measure, long before he knows anything about the laws which govern the solar system or the healing effect of violet rays. The experience first and the philosophy of it later.

In like manner, we become as little children and enter the kingdom of God, enjoying all kinds of profitable religious experiences away in advance of any adequate doctrinal equipment. We are not trying to experience the Westminster Confession or the Athanasian Creed—we want to experience religion. When any one turns his back upon evil as a program of life, faces toward the light, and puts his trust in the One who takes away sins, he enters into that experience.

This high claim is undergirded by a sound psychology. It is the touch of life upon life, warm, immediate, potent, which does the business. Faith in Christ as the supreme manifestation of the character of God and of his interest in us brings at once to our struggle for character, a fresh accession of power. It brings a warmth and an intensity of feeling, a joy and a satisfaction which come only from one's relation to a Living Person. And when that Person is the One whose name is above

every name, the One before whose quality of life every knee at last shall bow, the result is salvation. Salvation from all that hurts and hinders human life in its advance toward life eternal!

Even human fellowship of the right sort shows a strange power of healing. There came to one of our American prisons a woman under life sentence—she had committed murder under the most revolting conditions. She was all that is base and vile. She assailed the prison officials in language so dreadful that, hardened though they were by long contact with criminals, they stood aghast. When the chaplain and the matron of the prison tried to befriend the unfortunate woman, she scorned their offices, pouring out upon them a torrent of profane and obscene abuse, and finally spitting in the matron's face.

The matron was a strong, serene, high-minded Christian; she merely wiped her face and said, "I am sorry." Day after day for weeks together, she maintained that same attitude of friendliness. Six months passed! One night a turnkey on his way to lock the outer gates of the prison, saw this degraded woman deliberately kneel upon the floor of her cell to kiss the shadow of the matron which

had fallen there as she passed by on some errand of mercy.

It was the first drop in a coming shower. And when the shower fell, like the gentle rain from heaven, like the quality of mercy which is twice blessed, it melted that hard heart into a tenderness of response. She had been faced toward the light by the patient kindliness of one who had the spirit of the Master. Prophecies fail! Tongues cease! Knowledge vanishes away, for at best we know in part. But love never faileth. Love *never* faileth!

Now love like that costs something—it cannot be had for the asking. It has to be paid for in terms of life. That is why John said "the Lamb of God." It was the love of One who sacrificed himself for us which became redemptive. Love that is real always costs. Every Christmas people go out and buy millions of dollars' worth of things just for the pleasure of giving them away. Christmas is the most expensive season of the year. But if we did not love our friends and the members of our families, it would not cost us a cent.

God so loved the world that he gave his Son. His Son so loved the world, that he gave himself in that sacrificial ministry which was to take away

the sin of the world. "He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him and by his stripes we are healed." When love stands ready to go the whole way at whatever cost, it becomes redemptive.

How have the weak, the wilful, the sinful, been recovered to lives of integrity, of purity, of kindliness? Look back through the moral history of the race and you will find straight along that it has been accomplished by the vicarious sacrifice of that love which gives itself that others may benefit thereby. It is David Livingstone, a man of power, giving himself to those black folk in the heart of Africa. It is Maud Ballington Booth, a woman of culture and social position, giving herself first to the Salvation Army and then to the prisoners of America. It is Wilfred Grenfell, a man of rare intelligence and professional skill, giving himself to a lot of neglected, forgotten people on the coast of Labrador. It is the Good Shepherd, leaving the ninety and nine who are safe, and going out to lay down his life in heroic, bloody warfare with the wolves in order to save the sheep that was lost. It

is the outreach of unselfish affection giving itself for somebody else which becomes redemptive. Behold therefore the One who became the Lamb of God that he might take away the sin of the world!

How far can he do that now? We saw him saving Peter and Zaccheus and the guilty woman from their sins—how far can that experience be repeated in the lives of Tom and Dick and Harry? Can he do that for you and for me and for that man across the aisle? Can he project himself into this world of ours, with that same spiritual efficacy? Has Jesus Christ at this hour the necessary moral dynamic to change badness into goodness, weakness into strength, spiritual indifference into high-hearted devotion? That is the question before the house—does the religion of Christ work? It is the firm belief of the Christian Church that it does. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, tomorrow, forever!

Taking away sin is a process. It was not accomplished once for all nineteen hundred years ago "on a green hill far away outside a city wall." It is not accomplished once for all by some emotional crisis in the life of an individual. It is not an

episode in one's moral history—it is a patient orderly process of spiritual renewal and spiritual upbuilding.

For that reason, we cannot set off in a hard-and-fast way the saved and the unsaved. Any Christian man may be said to be saved from certain sins. And that same man may be said to be unsaved as yet from certain other sins. It has been suggested by some one that his wife could furnish a list of those other sins in case the man's own mind is not quite clear on that point. Salvation is the process of bringing the whole area of a man's interests and activities into obedience to the mind of Christ. It is the work of harmonizing a man's whole nature with the spirit and method of Jesus. And that process of recovery and upbuilding is being carried along wherever men live in fellowship with him.

"The Imitation of Christ," Thomas à Kempis put it in his little book of devotion. Better than that, the assimilation of Christ! Imitation may be outward and mechanical; it may be legalism. Assimilation is inward and vital—it is evangelical. And the latter is the method Jesus followed. He gave himself for us and to us. "This is my body,

broken for you. Take, eat!" Make it your own. "This is my blood, shed for you. Drink ye all of this." "The blood is the life." "He that hath the Son hath life." With a vivid, Oriental symbolism which all but repels us, he said to his disciples, "Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you." Assimilation! Faith in Christ means the solemn dedication of one's life to the securing of that quality of life which he manifested supremely and which he is thus able to impart to those who trust in him. Not a mere religion of instruction, or of culture or of imitation, but a religion of redemption!

This may sound very old-fashioned to some of you—no doubt it does. But as Borden P. Bowne once remarked: "The future as well as the past belongs to the old religion. It has been misrepresented and even caricatured by well-meaning but untrained men. Yet it has this advantage over all its competitors, it is alive. And life counts for much in organic history, spiritual as well as physical."

The old religion may need a new theology—I think that it does. It may need a more valid and

fitting interpretation. But when all is said and done, the old religion has the future in its hands because it roots down into that intimate sense of fellowship between these finite spirits of ours and the Infinite Spirit of Him who is above all and through all and in us all, of which the Incarnation of the Son of God is at once a manifestation and a pledge. And that is what we mean when we speak of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" taking away men's sins.

Every normal person—I am not speaking of those moral freaks who seem to have lost pretty much all sense of the higher values in life—every normal person craves an added sense of spiritual adequacy to the demands which are being made upon him. These demands are being made constantly—from within by one's own conscience, from without by the needs of others, from above by the Judge of all the earth. We feel our need of some reinforcement that we may not be weighed in the balance and found wanting. You are not satisfied with yourself—I am not satisfied with myself. And I say with all the sincerity and earnestness I possess, that this added increment of power

can be secured as nowhere else in that deeper sense of fellowship with him who takes away the sin of the world.

We have been told by a recent writer in striking phrase that "the decisive factors in social well-being are three, skill, fidelity, and ready coöperation with others." They have to do with mental capacity, moral capacity, and social capacity. In similar vein the New Testament said to us a long time ago, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that need not be ashamed"—here is skill! "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life"—here is fidelity! "By this shall men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another"—here is sympathy and co-operation! It is the unskilled, the unfaithful, the unbrotherly who are holding back the cause of social well-being.

We just aren't good enough—that is the trouble! Taken by and large, we aren't good enough to do the things which ought to be done. When we enter the place of worship and catch a vision of the Lord sitting upon his throne, we hear voices from the Unseen calling to us "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord

of Hosts." Then, if we are honest with ourselves, we are down upon our faces in a moment with that young man of old, crying out: "Woe is me, I am undone! I am unclean and I dwell in the midst of a people who are unclean."

But that vision did not end, you remember, with the sense of defeat. We are not good enough but we can be made good enough. "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, but if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The young man saw an angel flying through the open spaces of heaven with a live coal from the altar. His lips were touched, his inner life was purged, and his sin was taken away. Then as the divine voice came a second time, "Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?" the young man was ready with his response. "Here am I, send me." Send me in the way of aspiration, of devotion, of unselfish action! And that is the way that goes forever upward.

CHAPTER IX

THE MAN WITH THE WITHERED HAND

THE Master had a keen eye for human need. When he walked through the streets of Jerusalem, he noticed that poor beggar who had been born blind—and he did not leave him until his eyes were opened. When he passed through Jericho, he saw Zaccheus, that rich man who had been dishonest and miserly—and he did not leave him until his heart had been changed. Rich or poor, it mattered not—he saw their needs! His first thought was for the sick in body or in mind. He entered a crowded synagogue and his eye fell at once upon "a man with a withered hand." Focus your interest upon that unfortunate man—he is first cousin to us all.

Notice the nature of the man's trouble. He had "a withered hand." Luke was a physician, and he adds the statement that it was "his right hand,"

the highly trained, expert member of the body. The right hand is the tool with which we translate thoughts into deeds, ideas into achievements. What the heart desires and the head plans, the right hand executes. It furnishes a useful point of contact between the world of ideas and the world of accomplishment. It is tragic for a man to be crippled at that point.

This man was cut off in his powers of expression. If he had a fine thought, he could not write it out as another man would have done. If his heart was warm with kindly feeling, he could not stretch out his hand in friendly greeting as other men were doing. If he felt a generous impulse toward a needy person, there was his withered hand blocking the way. He felt shut up within himself—he could not give expression to many of his best desires.

Suppose the Master were present in one of our modern places of worship. Would he notice any withered hands? I have the feeling that he would. The man in the synagogue at Capernaum was a type. There are people now who are great readers. They get through tons of reading matter in the course of ten years, books, papers, magazines,

dealing with vice and crime and guilt, dealing with labor troubles, political problems, and social questions. Their eyes are all right and they feel that they must be doing a great deal of good in the world because they read so much about the world's problems.

They are also great listeners—they go to lectures and addresses and fervent pleas for social betterment. And because they feel so deeply about it all, while they are listening, they think that they are excellent people. Their ears are not withered.

They can also talk learnedly, fluently, and endlessly about these many forms of need. They can quote poetry and Scripture which bear upon these problems. They spend whole afternoons discussing the seriousness of the situation in which modern society finds itself. Their tongues are far from being withered.

But when it comes to putting into practice these principles and methods which they have heard about, read about, and talked about; when it comes to taking these shining ideals of human betterment into the street, the shop, the store, the factory, they fall down. The organs of achievement are not there —their right hands are withered.

Oftentimes these people cannot even get their hands into their pockets to give to the needy in any such generous measure as their wholesale output of talk might lead us to expect. They have never formed the habit of translating fine words into fine deeds. They do not seem to recognize the fact that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." They can read and listen and talk, but when the hour strikes for definite, helpful action in a world of sin and pain, they make a sorry showing.

It is just possible that this age of ours is in peculiar danger at that point. There is so much to read. The display of magazines on the news-stand is appalling, and the number of books dropping from the press in a steady stream is so great that it almost seems as if it might finally crowd us off of the earth.

And there are so many things to hear, for any one who has ears. And the opportunities for talking are limitless. It would not be strange if we were a bit overdeveloped in our eyes and ears and tongues.

Now for strength, we need symmetry. When any organ is abnormally developed, other organs may be robbed of their proper growth. They are under-

nourished and they may wither away. If a man's right leg is an inch longer than his left leg, the extra inch is not an advantage—it is a calamity and the man is a cripple. You can easily think of people whose eyes and ears and tongues have been developed at the expense of their right hands. Their time and strength are so completely taken up in hearing, listening, and talking that they have no energy left to do anything about it.

Mark Twain once described a small steamboat on the lower Mississippi which lacked sufficient boiler room to move along and to whistle at the same time. Whenever it undertook to blow its horn, it had to stop. Hear therefore the parable of the steamer with limited boiler capacity! Make the application for yourself!

The world needs above all else perhaps a larger supply of intelligent, kind-hearted people whose right hands are not withered. Men and women who are ready to use their hands in putting things straight; to take hold when something difficult is to be done! People who can lift some section of this troubled world to a higher level of well-being! The man who is ready to grapple with some hard problem and solve it! The woman who is ready to

stretch out her hand open, friendly, ungloved, in useful action.

The reading, the listening and the talking are all very well, if the readers, listeners, and talkers are just preparing themselves for competent action. The most pressing needs of the world to-day have been written about and talked about quite enough —the time is ripe for action. The motion before the house has to do with the use people mean to make of their right hands.

May the Giver of gifts give unto you
That which is good and that which is true,
The will to help and the power to do,
A heart that can sing the whole day through
Whether the skies be gray or blue.
May the Giver of gifts give this to you.

Here is a short story told by the Prince of story-tellers—"He spake as never man spake," and frequently in parables. "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves." The brigands robbed him, wounded him, and left him by the wayside half dead.

By chance a certain priest came along. His business as a priest was to talk about religion, and he

could do it thoroughly and well. He could utter noble sentiments as easily as he could repeat the multiplication table. He was often heard to say, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and thy neighbor as thyself." "Thou shalt not forget the poor and the needy nor the stranger within thy gates." He could talk in a wonderful way about doing good—his lips were all right. But when he saw that wounded traveler all bloody and dirty at the roadside, his right hand withered instantly. He passed by on the other side without doing anything to relieve the man's distress.

Then a Levite came along. His business was to sing about religion in the temple service—the Levites made up the choir. He had a heavenly voice. He could sing the most beautiful anthems about loving-kindness and tender mercy. "Blessed is he that considereth the poor, the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble." "He that hath pity on the poor lendeth to the Lord." "Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land and verily thou shalt be fed." These were his favorites—he had sung these songs about love from the Jewish hymnbook a thousand times. His throat was in prime condition. But when he saw that needy man, he drew

back. His right hand was withered, and he too passed by on the other side.

Then a Samaritan came along. Samaritans were not orthodox people—they rejected all of the Old Testament except the first five books; and they were off the track theologically at other points. He too saw the unfortunate man, and "he had compassion on him." He went to him and bound up his wounds and set him on his own beast and got him to an inn and took care of him, thus saving his life. He saw that same bit of human need and he did something about it, because his right hand was not withered. He too could talk about goodness and sing about it when occasion offered, but he put his fine sentiments into practice. When the lawyer asked Jesus what he should do to inherit eternal life, the Master held up the picture of this Samaritan with his warm heart and strong right hand, and said, "Do that."

I am connected with a great university, but I have the feeling that higher education has been discredited in certain quarters because the college has sent out too many men whose right hands were withered. Their heads are all right—at least they feel large and comfortable to their owners. And the tongues of these college men are in good working

order. They can tell people what they know, or what they think they know, in three or four different languages. They can analyze and criticize, they can speculate and tabulate in a wonderful way.

But when it comes to their hands, they seem inefficient. Set one of them down with an intricate piece of machinery or a difficult situation in business, with a problem in education where a roomful of restless urchins is assembled, or with some tangled political situation in a city crying out for better municipal government—set the college graduate down with any one of these concrete situations and oftentimes he does not seem to know what to do next. He can read and think and talk, but when it comes to carrying his ideas over into achievements, he falls down. His right hand hangs helpless at his side. Some one has said that the comment of the next generation upon this one will be, "How well they discussed their problems, but how lame they were in solving them!"

Here is one of the greates perils we have to face in our political life—it creates serious doubts as to the feasibility of democracy. You will find in every community respectable men and women who regard themselves as high-minded citizens. They read the

"New Republic" regularly and are thoroughly indignant over the political corruption which now and then shows its ugly head at the city hall or in the state-house or in the halls of Congress. They applaud vigorously when some stirring orator scores "the bosses." They beat upon their breasts and rend their garments whenever the names of certain political tricksters are mentioned.

But when the time comes to make a definite fight for clean politics, when the necessity for attending caucuses, primaries, and conventions arises, when all the disagreeable details connected with the development of an organization to make political action effective are urged upon them, they lose their interest. They are not ready to get down from their high horses of condemnation and take hold of the task of setting the city, which has been beaten and robbed by all sorts of brigands, on its feet. Their organs of civic action are withered.

The Master saw all this—he knew what was in man. He saw the bitter disappointment awaiting those who merely look on. He uttered a warning which searches out the defects in every man's life like the X-ray. When he sees people to-day eager to hear the last word on the subject of religion, keen

in their desire to lay hold of some fresh brand of "new thought," talking endlessly about the various up-to-date methods of religious activity, but taking it all out in talk, he says to them sadly, "Not every one that saith unto me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father. He that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not, I will liken unto a fool who built his house upon the sand. The rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew and beat upon that house"—the hard tests came as they always come sooner or later—"and it fell." And that was the end of it. Alas, for the man whose right hand is withered because he has not been doing the will of the Father. His tongue will not save him.

In the second place, notice the method of this man's recovery. "Jesus entered the synagogue and saw there a man with a withered hand." Human need in the place of worship! Human need had come to the right place. It was there at the point of approach to that whole system of divine help for which the synagogue stood. The Master responded sympathetically to the silent appeal of that man's

need. His eye rested upon that withered hand with a promise of help.

The Pharisees saw what was coming, and they began to murmur. "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath Day? Are there not six days when men may come to be healed?"

Not lawful to heal on the Sabbath! What is the day for? It was made for healing. It is a day to bind up the broken-hearted and to bring deliverance to the captives. It stands there in the calendar expressly for the healing of the hurts made by the rough life of the week. It stands as an oasis, a lovely green spot of leisure and repair, for all the withered lives which plod wearily across the monotonous stretches of dusty labor.

But there are men in all lands to whom ritual is more precious than mercy. They find more satisfaction in forms and ceremonies than in deeds of kindness. Their sharp noses discover more fragrance in burnt offerings than in unselfish ministry.

Jesus did not belong to that party. He cared more for kindness than for all sacrifice and burnt offering. He grounded the broader use he made of the Sabbath in those humane instincts which are

universal. "Does not every man of you loose his ox or his ass on the Sabbath and lead him away to water?" How much more these human lives which have been bound in shallows and in miseries by their misfortunes! Jesus therefore proceeded at once to heal the man with the withered hand, even though it was the Sabbath.

How did he do it? He called upon the man to act in the spirit of an obedient trust. The greatest blessings God sends are not received by those who wait for them passively—they come to those who make bold to act in the spirit of moral faith. "Stretch forth thy hand," Jesus said to the cripple.

"I cannot," the man replied. His arm had hung helpless at his side so long that he felt that he would never be able to raise it again. "Stretch forth thy hand"—the word was repeated! But still the man shook his head. "Try it." And when that word comes to any man in a voice from the unseen, it is his business to obey and it is God's business to see that the necessary strength is supplied. The man with the withered hand tried—and to his amazement he found that he could! When he stretched his arm out full length, "it was restored whole as the other."

Here is the method by which all the wonders of divine love are wrought. Here is the method by which all those withered faculties of ours are restored. We begin to do things, as William DeWitt Hyde once said, when we do not know how, in order that we may learn how. We keep on doing them imperfectly to the end that perfect efficiency may at last be ours. The inexperienced student of chemistry enters the laboratory, takes the tubes and materials into his own hands, begins to make experiments with his full share of blunder and breakage, in order that he may at last learn to be a chemist. When he travels the path of uncertain but educative experience, he is on his way to a sound knowledge of his subject.

So is every one who is born of the spirit, or led by the spirit, or saved by the spirit. He does not stand aloof until he understands everything about the difficult subject of religion. He goes straight into the oratory, the place of prayer, as into a laboratory. He undertakes to be a Christian when he does not know how, in order that he may learn how. He engages in Christian activity, awkwardly at first, to the end that he may

at last in competent fashion work the works of One who sent him.

Stretch forth thy soul! Lift up your eyes to the hills from whence cometh help. Let those withered faculties begin to act. Any one who will obey that command in the spirit of moral faith, will at last be made every whit whole.

How many people wait outside in a state of lethargy because they do not fully understand all the high claims of religion! "If we only knew," they say, "all about God and duty, prayer and redemption, the future life and the kingdom of heaven, we would undertake to live Christian lives."

How inconsistent they are! How many people learn to swim before they go into the water? Plunge in—there is no other way. The spiritual faculties wither where men stand shivering on the bank because of their doubts. The only way to learn, is to do. "Obedience is the organ of spiritual knowledge," Robertson said. "If any man has the will to do His will, he shall know." "Take my yoke upon you"—hitch yourself up with him for useful service—"and learn of me." By that method "ye shall find rest to your souls."

Spiritual things are spiritually discerned by those

who travel the road of an obedient trust. The point of contact between our spirits and the Infinite Spirit, who is the ground and source of all finite existence, is to be found in those obedient actions which express our finest moods and our highest resolves. Put the far country of wrong-doing and ungodly living behind you. Say to yourself and to him, "I will arise and go to my Father." When once you begin to put one foot before the other on that line of advance, he will see you even while you are yet a great way off. He will hasten to manifest himself to you in those mystic experiences where the human and the divine meet and touch and are mutually enriched.

How shall a prayerless man learn to pray and to work out genuine results by his petitions? He will not gain much by reading learned books on the subject, nor by hearing yet more learned men discourse upon those inmost exercises of the human soul. He will learn to pray, by praying.

Let him set the highest he has in holy desire, in moral aspiration, in unselfish interest in the well-being of his fellows, flowing heavenward! Let him undertake to link up his will (as far as he may) with that good, acceptable and perfect will of God

which is our peace! Let him knock with his own hand upon the door which now seems closed against him! Let him do that and keep on doing it, until presently the door opens into the treasure house of the unseen and he feels his hand of appeal taken up into the answering handclasp of the Father above. Then he will know beyond a peradventure that "the fervent effectual prayer of the rightened man availeth much." When he tries, he will find that he can.

How shall those who feel only a meager, chilly interest in the lives of others, learn to love their fellows as the Master loved us? How shall they gain that love which "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things" —that love which is indeed "the greatest thing in the world"?

They will not gain much by idly wishing for it nor merely by praying about it. They will not gain it by spending their days in the discussion of "charity cases" nor in the solemn consideration of "philanthropic methods." Let each one of them go forth upon his own two feet, seeking out the needy, forgotten, neglected lives which are all about us! Let him undertake to lift some of those lives into

a fuller measure of the joy of living. Let him breathe a finer spirit of thoughtful regard for the feelings and interests of others into all his social contacts! In a word, let each one do the deeds that love would prompt, if love were his—and love will be his.

It is along that line of unselfish action that the wonders of divine grace are wrought. It is by this method that cold and empty hearts are filled with that love which is from above. Withered faculties show signs of life the moment we begin to use them according to the will of God. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them"—and only then.

Where cross the crowded ways of life,
  Where sound the cries of race and clan
Above the noise of selfish strife,
  We hear Thy voice, O Son of man!

O Master, from the mountain side,
  Make haste to heal these hearts of pain,
Among these restless throngs abide,
  O tread the city's streets again.

Till sons of men shall learn Thy love
  And follow where Thy feet have trod:
Till glorious from Thy heaven above
  Shall come the city of our God.

CHAPTER X

KNOWLEDGE AND REVERENCE

THERE came a day when the Master was teaching his disciples to pray. He wanted them to know that prayer, as some one has said, is "not a farce but a force." He gave them the Lord's Prayer as a kind of universal model. "After this manner pray ye!" Not always in just these words, but let it indicate the general scope and method of your prayer.

The Lord's Prayer was uttered nineteen hundred years ago, yet more people are using it now than ever. It has been translated into all the languages of the earth. It is being offered this very day in more than three hundred different languages to Him who speaks them all. And it is significant that the first petition in it is "Hallowed be thy name."

We do not always put first what Jesus put first. If you were suddenly told that you could have the first thing you prayed for, what would it be? Health,

wealth, brains, fame, friends, happiness? These are all good things. They are all worth praying for, but no one of them stands first. Jesus set in the very forefront of this perfect prayer the request that God's name should be held in reverence. After that the petitions for daily bread, for the forgiveness of one's sins, for deliverance from evil, might well follow. But "Hallowed be thy name" came first.

Now what do those words mean? They go away beyond the mere avoidance of profane swearing. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." Well-bred people never do. Swearing is a silly, useless, disgusting habit, like snuffing. The man is to be pitied who feels that his ordinary talk is so feeble, uninteresting, and meager that he must continually prop it up by the profane use of sacred names. "Hallowed be thy name" looks much farther than that.

In ancient usage, the name indicated the nature of the one addressed. Abraham meant "father of a multitude"—he was the reputed founder of the Hebrew race. Jacob meant "Supplanter," a tricky man who takes advantage of his fellows. Solomon meant "peace"—his reign was not stained by war. Peter,

petros, meant "a rock," a man of strength. Jesus, the name which is above every name, means "Savior," One who saves people from their sins. The name indicated the nature of the one who bore it.

When we say, "Hallowed be thy name," we are praying that all those principles, values, activities which we associate with the name of God should be held in reverence. Let no man trifle with them! Let no man lay rude hands or lips or will upon any of them! In the ordering of his life, let him show an honest respect for all those qualities suggested by the name of God. Hallowed be all that! Offer that prayer sincerely and it goes clear down to the root of the matter. A complete answer to that prayer would transform the whole fabric of human life.

"When ye pray, say 'Our Father.' " Address the deity by that familiar term taken from the affectionate usage of every home. Familiarity does not breed contempt unless the thing itself is contemptible. Here is One who cannot be dragged down. Say "Our Father"—the very use of that term will develop confidence and a filial spirit in your own heart. What man of you, that is a father, would give his children stones if they were asking for bread! How much more then will the One whom we

call "the Heavenly Father" give good things to them that ask him! Pray with filial freedom and assurance.

But, before you let your voice fall, say also, "Hallowed be thy name." Let your whole approach to him be with reverence. The man who lacks the sense of awe, the man who never bows before that which he knows to be holier than himself, is not quite "all there." He is defective and a delinquent. Hallowed be all those eternal verities which are suggested by the divine name! Let your prayer show that blend of intimacy with reverence. Say "Our Father, hallowed be thy name." In that blend, we find the saving principle for all our interests.

> Let knowledge grow from more to more,
> But more of reverence in us dwell.

Let me apply that principle in several directions. First, to our use of the Sabbath. Newspaper men like to make merry over what they call "the blue laws" of Connecticut and Massachusetts. They would have us believe that at one time it was almost illegal in New England for a man to smile on Sunday, or to kiss his wife. It never was like that, of course. It may be that an artificial sanctity was at-

tached to those hours which lie between twelve o'clock Saturday night and twelve o'clock Sunday night. There is no saving grace in pulling a long face on Sunday, or in going about looking as if one were being taken out to be hanged. In so far as the Puritan Sabbath took that form, it was a case of misplaced emphasis.

We have reacted from all that—reacted so far that many people seem to think that the Fourth Commandment reads, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it jolly." They speak of it as "the week-end" —and a very *weak end* they often make it. Once it was "the first day of the week," the beginning of all that is highest and finest in human experience, "day of all the week the best," "the Lord's day." Now it is "the week-end."

They have "humanized" it, they say—humanized it until oftentimes there is nothing divine left in it. It is a holiday rather than a holy day. With unspeakable cant, they talk about going out to "worship God in nature," as if tearing about the country at forty miles an hour in an automobile and eating reckless meals at roadhouses bore any sort of resemblance to worshiping God in any form. When that habit is offered as an excuse for not going to

church, the flat insincerity of it makes it ridiculous.

What shall we say then? I am not in favor of what is called the Puritan Sabbath. "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath." It was made for those particular interests in a man's life which suffer neglect during the other six days. It is a day of privilege and opportunity to bring those interests up to their best estate.

In his use of the day, let every man frankly recognize what it may be made to mean in its freedom from ordinary toil, in its chance for a wider contact with the outdoors, in a larger leisure for the companionship of good books, in its privileges of finer fellowships, human as well as divine.

But let him also order his use of the day with an honest respect for the opportunities it offers for the building of a sounder moral fiber in the race, for the strengthening of our loyalty to the noblest ideals in sight, for the promotion of a more unselfish interest in the higher life of the community, for the deepening of our sense of the presence of God. It means all that, too; and these interests are not adequately provided for in the rougher contacts of the secular week. Let there be that blending of secular knowledge with religious reverence—then we shall

have a Sabbath observance which is not of the letter which killeth, but of the spirit which maketh alive.

Apply that same principle to the study of the Bible. When a man holds up the Bible and declares that it is "the infallible word of God from lid to lid," when he insists that every statement in it, historical, scientific, and religious, is to be taken as literally and exactly true, he outrages our sense of fact. That is not so. On the other hand when some man refers to the Bible as "a lot of myths, legends, old wives' tales," a cast-off collection of literary old clothes, he outrages both our sense of reverence and our sense of fact. That is not so either. The more thoughful people of the world have been using this book for centuries as a book of final values for all who would live nobly.

The only basis for an enduring faith in the Bible is sound, accurate, thorough knowledge. Let men study to show themselves approved unto God, workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Let them learn to discriminate between that which is merely local, temporary, incidental in this literature, and that which is universal, enduring, vital. Let them learn that we have

there a record of the progressive revelation which God made of himself through the religious experiences of a people chosen for their spiritual insight. It is a record of long, patient processes of mental and spiritual unfolding, stretching through a period of more than a thousand years. We have this heavenly treasure in the earthen vessel of a Hebrew civilization, and it takes shape, color, and odor from the vessel which contains it. The more thorough and intimate our knowledge of the Bible, the better it will be for those writings which are able to make men wise unto salvation and furnish them thoroughly for all good work.

But coupled with that fearless, painstaking scholarship, which walks through the pages of Holy Writ with eyes wide open to the truth, let there be also a genuine reverence for this book as a message from the heart of God to the soul of man. "Let knowledge grow from more to more, but more of reverence in us dwell." Men have found this book a lamp unto their feet and a light unto their path. "Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee." Discriminating study carried on in the right spirit leads to the renewal of the inner life. There is no necessary antagonism between

knowledge and reverence, between scholarship and devotion—they are the right and left hands of a common competent approach to the Scriptures. We say "Our Father," and we say also "Hallowed be thy name." In like manner, let there be the blending of intimate knowledge with wholesome reverence for the Bible and we shall find that "all Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for instruction in righteousness."

Apply that same principle to the matter of sex. This interest is talked about these days almost as much as the weather. Mature people can scarcely credit their ears sometimes when they hear the younger generation discussing certain subjects (once treated with great reserve) as frankly and as openly as if they were talking about meat and potatoes. Mature people can scarcely credit their eyes sometimes when they see certain plays, pictures, and novels opened out to the gaze of the world as freely as if they were grass and trees. What effect will this astonishing frankness have upon modesty and upon morality? No one can say as yet—we have not tried it long enough to know. Surely there is some occasion for concern at this point.

You will all agree with me instantly, that if this frank way of dealing with questions of sex, marriage, family life, diminishes that high sense of chivalry which every man should feel for womankind, or that fine sense of reserve which every woman should feel regarding her own person, it will be a terrible loss. If it drags down certain attitudes and sentiments which have been the hope of the race, making them common and unclean, it will mean social disaster. We cannot afford to destroy those considerations which have lifted human life to a higher level than that occupied by the other animals. There are books and plays, there are moving pictures and types of loose talk, which belong in the garbage barrel—and the sooner decent society puts them in the garbage barrel, the better it will be for decent society.

But this is not the whole truth. We shall have to face the facts of life finally, just as they are. There is a frank recognition of the physical basis of life, a fearless facing of the facts which underlie the mysterious attraction which one sex has for the other, which is entirely wholesome. It is not immoral nor immodest. It may well be far and away better in its results than the sham and make-believe,

the prudishness and hiding behind the door which have done so much to make that whole side of life seem unworthy.

"Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all those things," the Master would say. Food, clothing, shelter, sex companionship and all the rest. We honor him and we advance those purposes which he has at heart, when we deal with all these normal interests of life on the basis of intelligence and conscience. Let there be here also that same blending of intimate, accurate knowledge with an honest respect for all that life holds of joy, of privilege, of duty. "Let knowledge grow from more to more, but more of reverence in us dwell."

It is the will of God that all the kingdoms of this world, business and politics, education and recreation, music, art, the drama, the fine contacts of joyous friendship and the intimacies and sanctities of family life—it is the will of God that all these kingdoms should become kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. They are all to be brought under the rule of intelligent purpose and moral consecration. We shall have life, life abundant, life complete, life that is life indeed, only when that is done.

We are the followers of him who said, "I am

the truth and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." We are the followers of him who said also, "God is spirit." "Worship him in spirit and in truth," for this is eternal life, to know the true God in all those manifestations which he has made of his benign purposes for the race. Say "Our Father" and accept all these interests as his gift to his children. But say also, "Hallowed be all the precious spiritual values which are bound up with the various aspects of human existence."

Once more, apply this same principle to the relation of science and religion, of which we are hearing so much these days. We find thousands of panic-stricken people who feel that if modern science is allowed to have its way, if it goes on establishing its conclusions on the basis of competent research, it is all up with religion. Unless God made the world by a swift succession of creative acts, "Let there be this" and "Let there be that," bringing it all within the compass of a single week of six days, then God did not make the world at all. William Jennings Bryan seemed to believe that.

Unless God made man in an instant of time, out of nothing, with the divine image stamped upon

him, then God had nothing to do with it and man is not the child of God. They feel that this doctrine of "organic evolution," so widely accepted as a working hypothesis by which we may interpret the world order in which we find ourselves, is a doctrine of the pit, an invention of the devil. And that is that!

But other thousands of devout Christians, equally sincere, feel very differently about it. They believe that the universe is the result of a long, patient process of creative evolution, the lower forms of life preparing the way for the coming of the higher. They think of God as forming man "out of the dust of the ground" (as the ancient story has it), out of material already on hand, presumably out of the best material available. They think of God as breathing into this higher form of life the breath of his own mighty life as "man became a living soul." He did it not in a single instant of time—it was a long process of divine inbreathing, of spiritual impartation. It suggests the gradual infiltration of the human by the divine, so that man became the only being, so far as we know, with spiritual capacity for fellowship with his Maker. And this more accurate knowledge which they have gained regarding the creative processes by their

study of biology and geology, has given them a richer and a more radiant faith.

Read those early chapters of Genesis, not as historical or scientific documents, but as great religious poems betraying sublime spiritual truths. "In the beginning, God"—back of all these changing, puzzling phenomena, God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. The author of those opening verses in our Bible places at the center and foundation of the universe, Being, Personality, Intelligent Purpose, a Benign Will. "In the beginning, God" —therein lay his inspiration.

In these days we think of all these created forms of life as expressions of the divine purpose. We think of these cosmic activities, gravitation, heat, light, electricity, the movement of the planets, the ebb and flow of the tides, the growth of plant life, the growth of animal life, the growth and progress of human life, as modes of that Infinite Life which is the ground and source of all finite existence. God is not far from any one of us or from any created thing, for "in him we live and move and are," as fish live in the sea.

"We are not afraid," as a wise teacher said recently, "to open our eyes in the presence of nature,

nor ashamed to close them in the presence of God." "Let knowledge grow from more to more, but more of reverence in us dwell!" With this high trust in the immanence of God, we rejoice in all that modern research has brought us of a more competent knowledge of the world we live in. How much vaster and richer in content our world is when we compare it with the world of our remote ancestors who knew so little about it! We are profoundly grateful for all our knowledge, and we still look up in worshipful adoration, saying, "Hallowed be the name of him who is above all and through all and in us all."

The ancient singer looked up at the stars and sang: "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge." Then he looked into the depths of his own heart and saw there the presence of the moral order. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

The starry heavens above and the moral order within, here, as Immanuel Kant once said, are two

majestic realities before which man must stand uncovered. And then that ancient singer prayed that the same order and harmony which he saw in the sky might be reproduced in the movements of his own inner life. "Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer."

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
  But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
  May make one music as before,
But vaster—vaster—vaster.

CHAPTER XI

THE DIVINE PRESENCE

IN the book of Exodus there is a story so naïve that it fairly takes away one's breath if he reads it with his eyes wide open. A faithful servant of the Lord was conversing with Yahweh, the deity in whom he put his trust. He wanted to see more of him—seeing is believing. "Show me thy way! Show me thy glory! If now I have found grace in thy sight, let me behold thy face." He wanted to be shown—he wanted to be shown everything.

Then the deity said to him: "Thou hast found favor in my sight and I will make all of my goodness to pass before thee. But thou canst not see my face—no man can see my face and live." He assured his faithful follower that the full vision of his glory and the sight of his face would be too much for any man. He would be utterly overwhelmed by it and he would die.

But as a concession to his earnest desire, the Lord

offered to place this man "in a cleft of the rock." Then, as his glory passed by, he would cover the man with his hand. When he was safely by that cleft in the rock, he would take away his hand and Moses might peep out and see his back. That was as much of the divine glory as the man could stand, in his present stage of development, for no one could see the divine face and live.

The story is told in the primitive style which belongs to that early period. "When I was a child, I thought as a child and spake as a child." We all did—so did the whole human race. The human race had its period of religious immaturity; it saw "through a glass darkly" and knew only "in part." It thought as a child and spake as a child; and this story is one of its early utterances.

But in that same hour the Lord said to this man, "My presence shall go with thee and I will give thee rest." That is what I want to emphasize—the sense of the divine presence.

This man wanted to know the future. "Show me thy way!" Tell me what the next twelve months will bring, the next twelve years. I want to know all about what will happen to me and how it is all com-

ing out. Show me thy way! All the people who frequent the haunts of the mediums and the fortune-tellers, who are forever studying their horoscopes and the sun-spots, are saying the same thing. They wish to peep through some keyhole into the unknown. Show me what the future holds!

Their efforts are all doomed to disappointment, just as Moses was. The future is a sealed book for every one of us, like the one described in the Bible which was "sealed with seven seals and no man could break the seals or open the book."

It is better so. If every one knew in advance all the sorrows and possible defeats which await him in the untried years which lie ahead, he might be so depressed as to give up and throw away his life without even attempting to scale the pass. On the other hand, if each one were told in advance of all the joys and successes which await him, he might presume upon those coming triumphs. He might become lazy, self-complacent, overconfident, and fail to put forth the effort necessary to reap the reward.

We may well thank God that the future is unknown. It is good for every one of us to pray, "Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom; the night

is dark, and I am far from home; keep thou my feet, I do not ask to see the distant scene—one step enough for me." Let the future remain a sealed book! In his own good time, God will break the seals, and if we have followed his lead, we shall see that it has all been for the best. "So long thy power hath blessed me, sure it still will lead me on, o'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent till the night is gone."

When I was a boy in college, I wanted to study law. I selected my courses and ordered my reading with my eyes on the courts. I wanted to be a lawyer and go into politics and perhaps be sent to Congress. That prospect shone with rather more splendor in my eyes at that time than it would to-day.

But here I am in the ministry, and I have never held any kind of public office in my life. When I look back through the forty-one joyous years which have elapsed since I was ordained, it seems to me now that I should have missed the most precious experiences which my heart can picture, if I had not been during all that time a minister of Christ. But I am sure that I made my decision from purer motives because I could not foresee the future.

"It doth not yet appear what we shall be." It is

enough to know that he is with us and for us; and if we love him, all things will work together for our good.

I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

. . . . . .

I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care.

Show me thy way? No! Rather than lean upon my own understanding of all that the sealed book may hold, let me commit my ways unto the Lord that he may direct my paths as he sees fit.

The Lord assured this man that whatever the future might hold, the divine presence would go with him. The most potent earthly influence we know anything about is human personality. Heredity and physical environment, books, pictures, natural scenery, all these affect our development and influence the formation of character. But they are all subordinate to the direct influence of personality. The presence of a good man or the pres-

ence of a noble woman or the presence of a little child—how any one of these dominates the situation! How much more then the presence of him in whose light there is no darkness at all! "My presence shall go with thee."

A child is on Broadway for the first time. The noise, the rush, the confusion of it all, the sight of all these strange people, is bewildering. Left to himself the child would be overwhelmed with fear. But he is with his father, and as they make their way down Broadway hand in hand, he is reassured and enjoys it all immensely. The father's presence makes all the difference in the world to the child's state of mind.

Here is a man, burdened, saddened, discouraged by some untoward experience! He is sitting alone, but he is conscious all the while that the woman he loves is in the house. He may not at that moment see her face or hear her voice or feel the touch of her hand. But the sense of her presence and the thought of her affection for him and of her readiness to face and share everything with him, multiplies his strength by ten. Her presence is like an army with banners.

"The Lord is my shepherd," we sing in that love-

liest of all the psalms. Thousands of people know very little about the Bible, but they all know that verse. In the presence of all life's perplexities and perils, I feel oftentimes as ignorant and helpless as a sheep. But I have a shepherd. He may cause me to lie down in green pastures beside the still waters. He may, on the other hand, allow me to walk through the valley of the shadow of death. No matter! In either case "I will fear no evil," for he is with me. His presence, if I but cherish it, will make me sure that "goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life" and I shall dwell with him forever. "My presence shall go with thee" —with that high confidence I can face the future undaunted.

You may have heard John Henry Jowett tell this story. An old market woman was boarding a train. She carried a heavy basket on her arm. She was taking the produce of her little garden to a free market where she hoped to sell it. She had almost missed the train, which would have meant the loss of those early customers who might come to her stall. Even after she was safely aboard, her anxiety continued and she still carried the heavy load upon her arm.

Presently a kindly-faced young man across the aisle said to her: "Put your basket down, mother. The train will carry it and you." Cast all your care upon him, for he careth for you. "The Lord thy God, he it is that goeth with thee—he will not fail thee nor forsake thee."

That man in the cleft of the rock wanted to see God. "Show me thy glory. Let me behold thy face." He thought that if he could only get out from behind that big boulder he might see God. But it is not boulders which cut us off from the recognition of the divine presence. "The pure in heart see God," not because they are more fortunately located or because they have gotten out from behind the rocks. The pure in heart see God because in their own pure hearts they have something to see him with. God is spirit, and he is seen by those whose purity of life gives them spiritual discernment. "My presence shall go with thee"—the purer your heart, the more of him you will see.

It is just the lack of that experience which plunges many a man into utter despondency. You may recall those somber lines of Robert Burns, written when he was looking upon the nest of a field mouse which some farmer had plowed up.

That wee bit heap o' leaves and stibble
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turned out, for a' thy trouble,
. . . . . .
But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft a-gley,
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain
For promised joy.

Still thou art blest compared wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But oh! I backward cast my e'e
On prospects drear!
An' forward tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear.

It was just the lack of the sense of the divine presence which made that sweet singer oftentimes the poet of despair. My presence shall go with thee! Then, even though some of our plans "gang aft a-gley," we move ahead without a fear.

The Lord also gave this man a promise of rest. "My presence shall go with thee and I will give thee rest." It seems at first glance a strange promise to make to this busy man. He was actively engaged in affairs of wide significance. He was leading a

race of slaves out of the bondage of Egypt into the freedom and opportunity of a land of promise. His mind was busy with problems of organization and training. He was thinking of those institutions, political and industrial, social, educational, and religious, which they would need for their training. His heart was intent upon those lines of effort which would bring them inspiration and guidance. He was virtually at the head of a free Hebrew commonwealth in whose unfolding life all the nations of earth would be blessed. He was working overtime and all the time. He was not looking for rest.

But rest does not mean always, nor commonly, nor at its best, the total cessation of activity. When the tired business man goes off on his vacation, he does not want to sit down and look out of the window for hours together. That would not be rest. He takes his rod and reel and goes out to fish some trout stream from end to end. He takes his golf clubs and goes out to play eighteen holes and then another eighteen, walking incessantly. He takes his tennis racket and goes out to measure his eye and hand and speed against those of some other man across the net. He finds his rest in new and varied forms of action.

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Do you remember what follows in the very next verse? Not the offer of a Morris chair or a feather bed where the weary might lie down and do nothing. The very next word is the word "yoke." "Come unto me all that labor and are heavy laden—take my yoke upon you and ye shall find rest to your souls." A yoke for rest—it seems like a flat contradiction of terms.

But the Master knew what was in man. A yoke is made for two and only for two. "Yoke yourself up with me," he would say, "in a closer, more intimate form of fellowship," as we join hands and heads and hearts in a common service for bringing in the kingdom of God. Do that and ye shall find rest to your souls. This also would be a new, varied, and rewarding form of action.

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." In the closing chapter of the Bible we find outlined the nature of that rest. It stood at a long remove from sitting down with one's hands folded. The people of God found themselves in a city with walls great and high. The gates of that city were never shut. "The kings of the earth," the ruling forces of human society, "were bringing

their glory and their honor into it." The values which made that redeemed life rich and glad were flowing in from all the four quarters of the globe. On the east three gates, on the west three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates—and all those gates were open day and night.

"And his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads." They were busy all day long, but the quality of their action was so fine and their vision of spiritual reality so direct, that the very character of the One they served was reproduced in their lives. "His servants shall serve him, and his name shall be in their foreheads." And that is the rest which remains ever for the people of God.

There was a man in the Old Testament who prayed for the wings of a dove that he might fly away and be at rest. He was a coward and a quitter—he wanted to escape from his obligations. "O for the wings of a dove, that I might fly away!" There was another man in the New Testament, the Son of Man, who prayed that the Spirit might descend upon him like a dove, making him strong to do the will of the One who sent him. He would find his rest not in flight but in standing by; not in an

escape from duty but in doing always those things which pleased the Father. He loved righteousness, therefore God anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows. He found his highest joy in that redemptive action which would take away the sin of the world. This is the later, the higher, the holier ideal which we are set to follow.

How far then was the prayer of this ancient servant of the Lord answered? It was not answered at all according to the terms of his request. He asked that he might know the future—"Show me thy way"—but the book with the seven seals was not opened to his gaze. He asked to see the divine glory in the face of his Maker—"Show me thy glory"—but all that he saw that day was the Lord's back. He did, however, receive assurance that into that unknown future the divine presence would go with him. And in that sense of coöperation between his finite will and the Infinite good will of him who is above all and through all and in us all, he found peace and rest and joy. He found that high quality of life which enabled him to say at the last, "The eternal God is my refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

Thou Life within my life, than self more near,
Thou veiled Presence infinitely clear,
From all my nameless weariness I flee
To find my center and my rest in Thee.

CHAPTER XII

THE HOUSE OF MERCY

THERE is at Jerusalem a pool called Bethesda, "the house of mercy." The place had a beautiful name, yet it was anything but a beautiful place. It was a wretched little pool near the sheep market, surrounded by five porches which were filled with cripples, the lame, the halt, the withered. The grief and pain of a whole city was focused there. It was nothing like a modern hospital, clean and orderly, with skilled physicians and white-robed nurses moving about on their errands of mercy. It was dirty, ragged, repulsive—"House of Misery" you would have called it, rather than "House of Mercy."

There was a lovely story connected with the place which had awakened in the hearts of those sufferers a ray of hope. The water of the pool bubbled up occasionally when certain gases had collected at the bottom. The people of that early day, with more poetry than science in their make-up, said that at such times "an angel entered into the pool

and troubled the water." They believed that the first man who stepped in after the water was troubled would be healed of whatever disease he had. At such times, therefore, each one tried to be the first to get into the pool.

There was one man there who had been a cripple "for thirty-eight years." It is a long time—it is a very long time to a man who is sick. He had been lying there on his mat helpless for a third of a century and more.

He had no friends. His sickness had made him irritable, and nobody liked him. It is not easy to keep sweet, interesting, and lovable for thirty-eight years if one is a helpless cripple during all that time. He said in explanation of his sorry plight, "When the water is troubled I have no man to put me in."

But there came a day when he found a friend. It was on the Sabbath, which was made for healing of all sorts. The Master of kindliness was not spending his week-end at some lovely country seat—he was there at the Five Porches with their sorry burden of grief and pain. "I am a physician," he said, "and my business is not with those who are well but with those who are ill."

The Master had a ready sympathy for those who have suffered most, and his eye fell at once upon this man who had been a cripple for thirty-eight years. "Wilt thou be made whole?" he said. "Do you want to get well?"

The question was timely. There are chronic invalids who have reached the point where they "enjoy poor health" in a sense not intended by that awkward phrase. They like to talk about it; they enjoy the indulgence which it brings; they are loath to part with it. Do you want to get well? Have you the necessary faith and courage to make the effort?

Then the crippled man began to whine. "Sir, I have no man to put me in. While I am coming, another steppeth in before me."

But the Master brushed aside his complaint and gave him a challenge. "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." And there was such an accent of authority as well as of kindliness in the Master's voice, that the cripple tried and found to his amazement that he could. He stood up, and presently he walked off with his mat under his arm.

The Master made that place a "House of Mercy." It had not been so until he came. The story about the angel troubling the water was mere

legend—the Revised Version wisely omits it altogether. He was a fact, a solid, splendid, enduring fact. He went about linking up human need with that sense of divine help of which he was the supreme embodiment. "His name through faith in his name" made many a man every whit whole. He went about picking up those who had been knocked down, speaking kind words to those who had been wounded to the heart, setting upon their feet men who had been bruised and crippled by the world's rough usage. There at the Five Porches filled with grief and pain, he built his House of Mercy.

At the time of the Great War there was a young girl in a small town in Pennsylvania who had a good home, loving parents, and all the other pleasant things of life. She reached the point where she could not stand it any longer—she felt that she must get into the war and "do her bit." She started for Europe, and after no end of trouble made her way to that strip of Belgium which had been held against the Germans. There, not far back of the Belgian lines, she secured the use of a small house where the roof had been half shot away by German shells. With the aid of a little French maid, she opened a place of comfort. She made soup and

hot chocolate for the Belgian soldiers as they came back wearied from the trenches. She washed their wounds and bound them up with her own hands. And the spirit of the service she rendered was so beautiful that the soldiers fell into the way of calling the place "The Little House of Mercy." It was just that—she built it there by her own brave, kind deeds.

I wonder if that is not about what we are all sent into this world to do—to build little houses of mercy along the path of life. The style of the house and the material do not matter—you may build one from the dust of the ground, but if you breathe into it the breath of kindliness it will have a living soul. The Master built his House of Mercy there at the Five Porches when he set that cripple on his feet. The girl in the story built her House of Mercy for those weary Belgian soldiers who were "fighting for the right to work in their own fields and to live in their own homes and to pray in their own churches and to lie down at last and die on their own soil in the peace of God." You may build your little house where you will and as you may—if you fill it to the eaves with kindness, men

will call it "Bethesda, the House of Mercy."

You may build it in the place of want. When the Master said, "The poor ye have always with you," he was not uttering a wish nor a prophecy nor an ultimate ideal. He was stating a plain, hard fact. Nineteen centuries of Christian effort have not changed the fact—the poor are still here. At this very hour, there are millions of people who are in want.

I have lived for more than sixty years, and I have never seen the day when I was hungry and did not know where I could get food to meet my need. That has been the experience no doubt of every one of you. But I have looked into the eyes of multitudes of people who did not know where the next meal was coming from. Hunger and want are facts of experience, and they make potent appeal to every one who has a heart in his breast. It was said of the One whom we serve, "He would not send the multitude away hungry, lest they should faint by the way." He said also, "I was hungry and ye gave me meat." He felt the need of the world so keenly that he made it his own.

Needless to say, you cannot provide for all that need out of your own purse. But you are not asked

to build a cathedral of kindness which would house and relieve all the distress of earth. You are only asked to build a little House of Mercy, one here, one there, and another farther on, where human need and human kindness may be brought together. Any one who has hands and feet, a heart and a dollar, can do that.

The joy of doing it is like a foretaste of heaven. When you are tempted to murmur over your own lot in life, saying, "This is not smooth enough for me, and that is not fine enough," go and see how those people in the Five Porches are getting on. It is a sovereign cure for selfish discontent. If you will go down to some of the dark, narrow, dirty streets in your own city, where human beings like ourselves suffer, struggle, and die, in order to share with them some of the good things in your own life, you will feel as if you had seen the Son of Man at the Pool of Bethesda. You will see him—he is there at this moment, saying, "Inasmuch as ye do it unto the least of these, ye do it unto me."

What a world it would be if all those who are not crippled would go about lending a hand to

those who need a friendly lift! The cities of men would become like wards in the city of God.

There was a wealthy woman in Chicago who was to entertain in her home a friend whom she had known well for many years. He was to arrive from a neighboring city on an afternoon train, and the woman was sending her car to meet him. The chauffeur had never seen him and wondered how he would recognize the man. The woman remarked, "He is a tall, fine-looking man, and you will probably find him helping somebody."

It was not a lengthy description, but it sufficed. When the train drew in, the chauffeur saw a tall, fine-looking man helping a poorly dressed woman, who had a baby and a heavy valise, off the train. He had the baby on one arm and the valise in his other hand, and he looked as if he were wishing for a third hand to help the poor woman down the steps. He had the habit, and he could be identified by it anywhere. He went about "helping somebody," and the broad service he rendered covered a very wide field.

When the Good Samaritan found that man who had been beaten and robbed on the Jericho road,

he built around him at once a House of Mercy. He did not have much material at hand—he did not go about equipped for emergencies like a Red Cross nurse. He tore off a strip of his Oriental robe and bound up the man's wounds. He poured in a little oil and wine to make the bandages soft. He got the man up and set him on his own beast. It was not much of a beast; it was probably one of those small Syrian donkeys which they used in that country. An ambulance would have been better, or two men with a stretcher, but the Samaritan had none of these. We have to build our Houses of Mercy out of the material we have. But he got the man to the inn and took care of him and saved his life. When the lawyer asked Jesus what he should do to inherit eternal life, Jesus held before him this House of Mercy which the Good Samaritan built and said to him, "Go thou and do likewise."

Men called Jesus "The Messiah," "The Prince of Peace," "The Savior of the world," "The Son of God." They did well—He is all that and more. But if we were searching for an inscription to place upon an empty tomb where his body was once laid for an hour, I am not sure that we could find one which would please him more than those words

which came from the lips of the warm-hearted Peter. "He went about doing good."

He did not stand in one place waiting for need to come to him; he went about where the need was and relieved it. He built Houses of Mercy wherever he went, not of bricks and boards but out of generous deeds and kind words and the healing atmosphere of his own presence. If you would follow him, do that. If you would show yourself worthy to wear his name in being called "a Christian," let that be the method of your life. "Pure and undefiled religion before God the Father" is keeping one's self "unspotted from the world" and "visiting the helpless in their affliction" for their relief. It is living a clean life and a kindly life.

You may build your House of Mercy for those who are in mental distress. They may not be poor in pocket, but they are as lonely as that man was at Bethesda. They may be surrounded with people as he was there at the Five Porches. But it is not a question of physical presence—it is a question of interest, sympathy, and companionship. Broadway and Fifth Avenue are as lonesome as North Dakota if you don't know anybody. The young man who

has come from the farm to make his way in the city may be as lonely as Robinson Crusoe was before his man Friday turned up. The young woman in the hall bedroom on the third floor back, going from her room to her work and from her work to her room, may be as depressed as Elijah was under the juniper tree there in the wilderness. Jerusalem is not the only city where there are people who feel as if they had been forgotten.

You will hear people scolding the churches sometimes because they are not more friendly. The churches should be friendly—the One whose name they bear said to his followers: "I have called you friends. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." That was to be the supreme test. He desired that all people should be friends.

You may go to some popular city church where the congregations are large, and wonder why those people do not speak to you. But many of them are strangers also and they are wondering why you do not speak to them. Well, why not? People who are good enough to go to church can usually be trusted not to bite. Why not build a little House of Friendship around you and the one who sits near you in

our Father's house? It would be more beautiful in his sight than a stained-glass window.

You will find people there who are crippled by their doubts. They do not know what to believe. They are not sure about God—they feel oftentimes that there is nothing behind all this big blooming confusion but blind, unreasoning force. They lack the confidence and uplift which come from prayer; they do not know how to pray, and they are not sure that they believe in it. When sorrow comes, they lack the courage which springs from a clear, firm faith in a future life.

Some of them seem to think that the less they believe, the better. They will ask the minister in anxious tones: "Must I believe this? Must I believe that, in order to be a Christian?"

It is a curious attitude. You never hear any one saying: "How much *must* I eat in order to be kept alive? Naturally I want to eat just as little as possible!" Dr. Tanner lived once for forty days on water—he did not recommend it, however, as a steady diet. How much *may* I eat for the fullest measure of health and strength? That is the normal state of mind. How much *may* I believe in reason and conscience to make my life full and strong and

glad? Some of those people who have been living on the thinnest sort of theological gruel would not look so sad when the subject of religion is mentioned, if they ate more.

You would all agree that a Christian faith, grounded in reason, vitalized by Christian experience, and kept practical by being related to everyday duty, is about the best asset any one can have. It is a splendid equipment for the life that now is and it furnishes the only adequate preparation for that life which is to come.

Every one must have some sort of creed. When the fool said in his heart, "There is no God," that was his creed. He did not know that—he could not know it without knowing everything, because if there had been any section of the universe where his knowledge had not reached, God might have been there. "There is no God"—that was merely his notion about it, and a sorry creed it was.

The agnostic goes about insisting that no one can know anything about God or prayer or the future life; that is his creed, and a chilly, disappointing one it is. The moment any one moves out beyond the things of sense or the demonstrations of mathematics or of formal logic, and begins to

think about the great verities, he forms certain convictions, positive or negative, inspiring or depressing—and those convictions make up his creed.

You probably have a creed of your own. It may be a modest affair. It may be like the Samaritan's donkey, nothing prancing or showy. But it carries you. It helps you to put down temptation under your feet. It holds you up to your duty without flinching. It gives you comfort when the hard days come. Why not share it with those who grope in the dark? Why not build occasionally a little House of Faith for those unbelieving souls who have nowhere to lay their heads?

You have talked about the weather quite as much as it deserves. You have debated sufficiently many of the petty questions of life. You may have said all that you know about the Great War. Why not talk in simple, natural fashion, when occasion offers, about God and duty, prayer and redemption, the growth of the kingdom and the life to come? You will see in many a face a look which says, "Help thou mine unbelief." Share with that life your own best thought, your own underlying trust, your own aspiration for the highest there is. If you do, every now and then some one will come

back saying, "Now I believe, not because of thy word alone for I have seen for myself and I know that He is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."

You may build your House of Mercy for those who have been doing wrong. The Master went into the synagogue at Nazareth one Sabbath "as his custom was," and they asked him to read the lesson. This is what he read. "The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor. He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and to set at liberty them that are bruised." Then he added, "This day this Scripture is fulfilled in your ears."

He told that congregation that he was the door, and he invited them all to come in where he was. "I am the door, by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." Some of those who heard him went in: Peter, James and John, Mary, Martha, and others. He built around them a House of Help where they found relief and recovery from the guilt and power of wrong-doing.

He was teaching on another occasion in the

temple at Jerusalem when the Pharisees dragged into His presence a wretched woman who had been doing wrong. "It is written in the law of Moses," they said, "that all such should be stoned." The Master could not bear to look upon their spiteful satisfaction in the woman's sin. He turned away and looked at the ground. The very dirt under his feet was better to look at than the angry faces of those men.

But they continued their clamor that she should be stoned. Then He turned to them and said, "Let him that is without sin among you, cast the first stone." Each man knew his own heart and each man knew something of the lives of his fellows. Under that searching word, no man felt quite competent to lead off in the stoning. They stole out one by one until the woman was left alone in the midst, a great sinner in the presence of a great savior!

Then He built about her a House of Mercy. "Woman, hath no man condemned thee?" "No man, Lord," she replied. "Neither do I—go and sin no more." Then and there a penitent woman was faced toward the light with a great, sweet hope in her heart.

We are sent here to do just that, according to the measure of our ability. "I am the light of the world," Jesus said; and then before he let his voice fall, he added, "Ye are the light of the world." Let your light so shine that men may see their way about and walk toward heaven. He is the true vine and we are the branches of that same redemptive effort.

You cannot walk the length of a city block without meeting people who have been doing wrong. Some of them are tired of it. We cannot cast the evil out of their hearts by harsh words and unfeeling condemnation. Satan does not cast out Satan. But by sympathy and insight, by believing in those who have lost faith in themselves, we may detach them from their sins, so that what is loosed on earth shall be loosed in heaven. The same fine qualities which changed the lives of men and women when Jesus walked the streets of Jerusalem, will change lives to-day when those qualities are manifested by us. "I give unto you the keys of the kingdom," he said, and by our merciful consideration for others we help them to enter.

There are people on our own streets, whom we see every day, who are warmed or chilled, hindered

or helped by what they see in us. The ugly outburst of temper, a careless indifference to their feelings, the lack of anything gracious in our approach, may send them farther away from the Father's house. What a tragedy it is, when it might so easily be otherwise!

Some of them may have been waiting for thirty-eight years to receive that friendly lift which would mean an abundant entrance into Christian life. There is no one who has not the material at hand to build on his own street what Forbes-Robertson built in the boarding house in Bloomsbury in "The Passing of the Third Floor Back," a House of Recovery for those who have made moral failure. "If any one be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

When Gladstone was Prime Minister he used to exchange a word of greeting now and then with a boy who swept the crossing in front of the Houses of Parliament. He sometimes gave the boy a shilling, for the little chap was poor and a cripple. One day he was missing and Gladstone asked the policeman on the beat what had become of him. He

was told that the boy had been knocked down by a careless cab driver and badly hurt. The officer had taken him home, and in telling Gladstone about it, he mentioned the number of the tenement where the boy lived.

The next day a curate of the Anglican Church who knew the family dropped in to see the little fellow on his bed of pain. "Has any one else been here to see you?" he asked. "Oh, yes," the boy replied, "Mr. Gladstone was here and he read to me out of the Bible and prayed and gave my mother ten shillings when he went away."

"Gladstone? What Gladstone?" The curate could not think of any clergyman or charity worker in that part of the city who bore that name. "Oh," the boy said, "there is only one Gladstone: William Ewart Gladstone! I know him and he knows me." The man with the cares of an empire on his shoulders had found time to go there and build a House of Help around that lonely street sweeper. Like his Master, he went about doing good.

You are moving swiftly to the place where you will find but little satisfaction in much that you have built. These houses of material gain, of worldly success, of passing pleasure, are flimsy

structures at best. They are like "the House that Jack Built"—they do not last. When the rain descends and the floods come and the winds blow and beat upon them, they fall. But you may, if you will, by your practice of kindliness and your obedience to the divine will, erect for yourself a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. That house will be a habitation of the Spirit from which your soul will go no more out.

There are hermit souls that live withdrawn
In the place of their self-content;
There are souls like stars, that dwell apart
In a fellowless firmament;
There are pioneer souls that blaze their paths
Where the highways never ran—
But let me live by the side of the road
And be a friend to man.

Let me live in a house by the side of the road
Where the race of men go by—
The men who are good and the men who are bad,
As good and as bad as I.
I would not sit in the scorner's seat,
Or hurl the cynic's ban—
Let me live in a house by the side of the road
And be a friend to man.

CHAPTER XIII

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

I AM taking as my subject a very familiar query —"Where do we go from here?" I shall use two texts. They stand far apart in the Scriptures—one of them in the first book of the Bible, the other in almost the last—yet they have to do with two men who lived next door. There was a time when the two men touched elbows daily. "Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom." "Abraham went out not knowing whither."

Now the key words in those texts are the two words "toward" and "whither." They indicate the general direction each life was taking. They deal not with achievement but with tendency—and that is the most significant fact about any life. When a man is moving along a certain line, you can judge as to the outcome by the direction he takes! "Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom." He was not there yet, but he was headed that way."

Sodom was one of the cities of the plain there in the Jordan Valley. It was a prosperous town. Business was good. Bank clearings showed up well. The price of real estate on Main Street was advancing. "Watch Sodom grow," the Rotary Club of that day was saying through its publicity man.

Lot sensed the situation. He saw the big buildings going up, and he wanted a share of the fat prosperity they represented. He stood ready to overlook the fact that it was a vile place—its morals were unspeakable, and the very name of Sodom had already become a byword and a hissing. "No matter," he said, "I can make money there! Sodom is good enough for me, and it shall be my home town." He therefore took his wife and daughters and pitched his tent toward Sodom.

Abraham, on the other hand, turned his back on Sodom. He would not bring up his family in any such place. He did not want the men of Sodom to be slapping him on the back and calling him by his first name. He wanted something higher, finer, vaster, than anything offered in those cities of the plain. He was looking for a city that had foundations, whose builder and maker was God.

He did not know just where it was, nor how long it would take him to reach it, nor just how he would gain a footing there. "He went out not knowing whither"—it was a venture of faith. He set his face toward God and righteousness and a life of service—and by his influence all the nations of the earth have been blessed. The two men stood side by side that day when they made their choices, but the tendencies they showed had already set them as far apart as the North Pole and the South Pole.

> To every man there openeth
> A Way and Ways and a Way,
> And the High Soul climbs the High way,
> And the Low Soul gropes the Low,
> . . . . . .
> And every man decideth
> The Way his soul shall go.

"I am the way," the Master said, indicating the right road! No man cometh to his best but by him. The Christian religion in the first century was commonly called "The Way." "I persecuted this way unto the death," Paul said, looking back with remorse upon a certain period in his own career. "After the way they call heresy, so worship I the

God of my fathers," he said later. This is "the way" —walk in it! Every one who is in that way or faces that way, becomes a Christian, even though his present spiritual achievements may be meager.

"What is Christianity?" Willard Sperry asks in his little book. "It is a way of life." General Grant telling General Lee at Appomattox that the Southern cavalrymen had better keep their horses because they would need them for the spring plowing! John Hay returning the Boxer indemnity money to China to create a fund for the education of Chinese young men! David Livingstone letting his light shine in the Dark Continent that Africa might see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ! William Booth, head of the Salvation Army, standing supreme in his generation as the friend of publicans and sinners! Wilfred Grenfell devoting his unusual intellectual ability, his professional skill as a physician, the charm and force of his personality as a man, to the service of a lot of unfortunate, neglected, forgotten fishermen on the coasts of Labrador! Edith Cavell facing death in Belgium and saying, "Patriotism is not enough—we must have no hatred in our hearts toward anybody." She is still saying it, while the tumult and

the shouting dies, the captains and the kings depart, and "the Hymn of Hate" fades out.

All that is Christianity, for Christianity is a way of life. It is *the* way of life; and when it dominates a man's career, he is a Christian.

Go back to Lot again—he pitched his tent toward Sodom! Lot's first name was "Babbitt"—it does not appear in the Authorized Version but you may find it in some of these "modern translations" of the Bible. He was out for the goods and he wanted them in the large. He wanted a fortune with all the power, the privilege, and the pleasure which fortune is supposed to bring. "He lifted up his eyes," the record says, "and saw the plain of Jordan that it was well watered." There was no better pasture anywhere in Palestine. Lot coveted that pasture for his flocks, and the money it would mean when he marketed them.

The love of money lies at the root of all manner of evil. The offer of all the kingdoms of this world in exchange for moral aspiration is one of the best cards Satan has in his pack. He wins many a trick with it. He sees many a life go down in defeat when he leads from that long suit.

Sodom is not just a place on the map of that ancient, half-forgotten world. Sodom is a state of mind, a way of looking at things, a mode of life. And Sodom is still doing business, although that city of the plain was burned up three thousand years ago. Sodom is listed on the Stock Exchange. It is entered in Society's Blue Book. It shows its ugly head in clubs where men do congregate. I am afraid that we might find what the chemist would call "traces" of Sodom in some of our educational institutions and even in some of our churches.

Sodom is that mode of life which sets its heart mainly upon things which perish with the using. It insists upon an abundance of good things to eat and drink—the latter especially, law or no law! It wants a lot of nice things to wear and a wealth of expensive furniture and an endless series of thrills from a round of amusement and self-indulgence. Faith, hope, love, moral aspiration, and Christian devotion—all these it pooh-poohs. "Let's get down to brass tacks!" it says in cynical fashion. All that is Sodom!

This man Lot lived in a world of things which could be bought and sold. Now the stream of commodities flowed this way, now it flowed that way;

but always in such a way as to turn the wheels of his mill and grind him out a grist of profits. He lived in that stream as a trout lives in the brook. He ate in it, slept in it, worked in it, thought in it, seven days in the week. He was never out of it for an hour from Monday morning to Sunday night. There was no holy day on his calendar. If you had talked with him on any other topic than that of trade, you would have found him as dull as a pine stump. He believed that a man's life does consist in the abundance of the things that he can buy. All that too is Sodom.

When Abraham and Lot came together that day the older man offered the younger a generous option. "Let there be no strife between thee and me! The whole plain is before thee—take thy choice."

The young man rather plumed himself on the fact that he had the "inside dope" on the situation and that he was getting the best of an old man now a bit shaky on his legs and a bit sentimental in his business judgment. Lot made a shrewd, selfish choice based entirely on his desire for gain. He was bound to break into Sodom, even though the moral tone of the place was low and mean.

That choice indicated the general trend of the

man's life and it spelled ruin. The fire and brimstone which rained from heaven upon Sodom are vivid symbols of the fate which in one form or another always overtakes that mode of life.

The rest of the story follows naturally and inevitably. Lot filled his purse—"he was rich," the record says, "in flocks and herds and tents, in silver and in gold." But his head and his heart were as empty and uninteresting as a last year's bird's nest. He lived to see his home life become as bitter as a pillar of salt. He lived to see his daughters become shameless and profligate. Disaster came and swept away all his property. He lost everything and wandered as a homeless outcast among the caves of Zoar.

Last of all, he lost himself. What shall it profit a man though he gain all the outward advantages which can be named and then loses himself! When Lot looked in the glass, he did not see anything —there was nobody there. This is the tragic outcome of every life which pitches its tent toward Sodom.

Look now at the other man! Abraham turned his back on Sodom and "went out not knowing whither"

—it was a venture of faith. He was betting his life, as Donald Hankey said, that there is a God and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him. He was staking his whole future on obedience to the highest impulse he had ever felt. And that way honor lies, and victory, and a destiny which will outlast and outshine the stars.

"Get thee out," a voice said—and it was a divine voice—"get thee out unto a land that I will show thee." He did not know just where it was nor how far away. He had no friends there as yet. He carried no letter of credit drawn upon the resources of that unknown country. He was a moral pioneer breaking the path for all who might follow in his train. He was a discoverer charting the course for all who might sail the high seas of spiritual adventure under sealed orders. "He went out," he went west, all unaware of the full significance of his action.

In the same spirit, Paul went out when his hour struck. He too went west, crossing the Ægean Sea from Troas in Asia to Macedonia in Europe, that he might plant the gospel of Christ in that newer continent where it found its highest development in the centuries which followed.

In the same spirit, Christian missionaries in the time of Augustine went out—they went west from Italy to England when the latter country was still pagan. In that same spirit, the Pilgrims of England and Holland went out—they went west from Europe to America to lay here the foundations of a great republic in faith and righteousness. They went out not knowing whither, all unaware of the mighty development which would follow upon their action. It is a long, honorable procession of spiritual adventure. And it too is to be judged, not by the meager achievements of those earlier years, but by its general tendency and direction.

It is not what you are nor where you are at this moment which determines your rating on the books the Lord keeps. It is what you want to be and where you desire to go—and by the grace of God mean to go before you are through—that tells the story.

It is the way you face! You may not be in Sodom—God forbid—but if you are headed that way, then the best that life holds for you is imperiled. You may not be walking with sure, firm tread on the higher levels of spiritual achievement—very few of us are—but if you face that way and are moving, then you can afford to sing a Te Deum.

It is only a question of time, for you are going on and up.

Take long views of life! You cannot bring the growth, the advance, the destiny of a human soul within the limits of a movie film which is soon reeled off. How brief this whole earthly life is at best! "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet it is soon cut off and we fly away." It is only a clock-tick in the eyes of him with whom a thousand years are as one day.

"So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom! Satisfy us early with thy mercy! Establish thou the work of our hands and let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us!" It is a prayer which every thoughtful person feels moved to make even before his sun has passed the meridian.

It is to-morrow even more than yesterday which makes to-day what it is—and that is saying a great deal. All the yesterdays have their part in determining our present status, but all the to-morrows as well have been casting the spell of their influence upon us. If there should be an endless series of to-

morrows awaiting us, then how mighty becomes their appeal!

Look ahead—a long, straight look ahead, facing the highest that life can hold—and then move toward it with the same high resolve which was shown by this man of old! Look for that social order which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God.

You notice that this man of faith was unselfish. He had never been bitten by that fad which is forever talking about "being left free to live its own life." He was not yielding to every chance impulse nor seeking constantly for his own self-realization, whether or no. His robust nature would have made short work of that sort of folderol. Self-realization with him was only a means to an end. He had no desire to become a stagnant pool, forever receiving but never giving, and therefore destined to be covered with a thick, green, useless scum. He would make his life a river of water, moving on and with an abundant outlet.

His main function in life became a transmissive function. "I will bless thee," the voice said, "and thou shalt be a blessing. I will make of thee a great

nation, and in thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

His mark of distinction lay not in possession but in transmission. As Francis Peabody of Harvard says: "There is really nothing glorious in mere possession. It may be mean and inglorious—as mean when the possession is brains or power as when it is bonds or wheat." The worth of any life is to be found in its transmissive capacity. "I will bless thee, and thou shalt be a blessing."

How splendidly those Pilgrims here on our own Atlantic coast embodied that principle! They sailed out from the old world bound for the new, not knowing whither they went. They made it a spiritual as well as a physical venture of faith. They bravely committed themselves to "the ways of God made known and to be made known," as they put it. They boldly announced their belief that "more light was yet to break from God's word." They did not know it all—they were eager to know more. And because they too had the Messianic spirit, all the nations of the world have been blessed in what they did. "I will bless thee, and thou shalt be a blessing." The only man who ever finds his life is the one who stands ready to lose it in unselfish service.

Come back then to the place where we started—"Where do we go from here?" It all depends! The significant fact about any life is not its present position and achievements but its tendency and direction. If you are pitching your tent of aspiration toward a world of things, then you will go as Lot went. If, on the other hand, you fare forth on a spiritual quest, intent upon the best that life holds, it is already yours.

Where do we go from here, when this whole earthly experience comes to a close? We all go, and we go soon, and we go never to return. What will it be like?

I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

. . . .

I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care.

In that unknown future to which we shall go in the unfolding years, the place where we shall find ourselves will depend upon which way we face in

the general trend and drift of our lives. One's future status is not determined by the hurried, scrambling preparation which he makes for the day of judgment at the eleventh hour. Men are judged "according to the deeds done in the body" —the whole of them—with the net result which the total performance of them has yielded in a certain firm set of disposition and character. The general slant and direction which a man's life shows in this present world serves to indicate where and what he will be in the world to come.

You may be standing this very day at the parting of the ways. You can go forward or backward, to the right hand or to the left, up or down! You can go toward Sodom or toward the city of God! How much is involved—think hard before you make your choice!

Here is the line which the greatest of the Apostles would have every one of us take! "We all with open face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord are changed!" Not in a moment, nor in a month, nor in a lifetime, but through all the unending years! "We are changed into the same image," until at last "we awake in his likeness."

CHAPTER XIV

REAL RELIGION

THERE was a man at Caesarea Philippi who had gotten down to bed-rock. He had just been told by one who knew, that he was destined to furnish foundation material for the kingdom of God. He was the first true "fundamentalist." "Blessed are thou, Simon—flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee but my Father in heaven. Thou art Peter"—*petros*, the same root as our word "petrify"—"thou art a rock, and on this rock I will build."

Surely this man will know what real religion is. I believe that he did know. I am going to ask him presently, but for the moment he will wait here until we have examined several other witnesses who have been summoned. It is only fair that they should be heard. If you were to start down Broadway to-morrow morning and ask the first twenty intelligent-looking men you met, "What is the es-

sence of the Christian religion?" you would, I am sure, receive at least four different answers.

First of all, you would be told that Christianity is a historical movement which began with the life and teaching and personal influence of Jesus of Nazareth. He gathered about him a few friends and followers who accepted his principles and became saturated with his spirit. When he was gone, they organized themselves into a church. This church developed modes of worship, of government, of expansion. It moved out into the world, setting up its banners and calling upon people to enlist. It organized these people into companies, regiments, brigades—"like a mighty army moved the Church of God." Every one who marched and fought under its banners became a Christian. He was a member of the body of Christ by virtue of his standing in that organization. Loyalty to the movement is the very essence of Christian life. Millions of people believe that.

You would be told that the essence of Christianity is to be found in certain forms and ceremonies, in a set of worshipful gestures, in a system of sacraments to be observed. When water, the

universal agent of cleansing, is applied to the body of a person with a certain religious accent—"In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost"—he is thereby initiated into Christian life as a member of the body of Christ. When he partakes of the bread and wine of the sacrament, offered him according to a certain sacred method, he is feeding upon the very essence of the Christian religion. When his life is disciplined by its participation in certain divinely ordered observances, he makes increase in spiritual stature, in wisdom, and in favor with God and man. Millions of people believe that. This claim was the ground of appeal in the Eucharistic Congress held in Chicago in 1926, when two hundred thousand people gathered from far and near to participate in a single religious service. The heart of that service was not a great sermon preached by an eloquent minister of the gospel. The heart of it was not the singing of certain noble religious anthems by heavenly choirs. The heart of the service was in the observance of a single sacrament. Millions of people believe that the very essence of Christianity is to be found in those forms and ceremonies.

You would be told that the essence of the Chris-

tian religion is to be found in a certain body of beliefs. Here are doctrines which have to do with the being, the character, and the purposes of God as he has revealed himself in his world, in his word, in his Son. Here are doctrines which have to do with man as the child of God, his needs, his privileges, his destiny. They furnish us a working philosophy of the relations between man and his Maker. One's eternal welfare may depend upon his accepting or his failing to accept these beliefs. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." That claim lies at the foundation of the fundamentalist movement. These people are earnestly insistent upon a rigid adherence to a certain body of beliefs because they regard them as altogether vital.

You would be told that the essence of Christianity is to be found in a certain rule of life. It means doing unto others as you would have others do to you. It means doing justly, loving mercy, walking humbly before God. "Pure religion and undefiled before God the Father is this, to visit the widows and fatherless (as types of the world's need) in their affliction and to keep one's self unspotted from the world." In a word, it is to live a kindly life and a clean life. One who strives to order his

conduct according to the methods outlined here in the gospels, is a Christian. These people are interested in conduct rather than ritual, in life more than in logic. "Conduct," Matthew Arnold used to say, "is three-fourths of our life"; and right conduct is the very essence of Christianity.

Now every one of those answers given by the men you met on Broadway contains a certain measure of truth. But you cannot say of any one of them that it is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Those answers suggest bits and fragments of the great reality which we call "Christianity." They belong to the fringe rather than to the center of it. A man might perform every one of those acts of ritual and accept all of those beliefs and render any number of those deeds of kindness and still fail to be a Christian as the term is used here in the New Testament.

What then is the essence of the Christian religion? It is high time that we asked this man who had gotten down to bed-rock. He has been standing here patiently while we have circled around and about. Tell us, Peter, what the essence of Christianity really is.

We come then to a fifth answer, which touches bottom. The essence of Christianity is to be found in a certain inward experience. Flesh and blood had not revealed it to Peter, but the Father who is in heaven. He had gotten his knowledge of spiritual reality not from hearsay, nor from reading about it in a book; it had been wrought into his very soul. The essence of any man's religion—yours, mine, Peter's, everybody's—is to be found in the soul's awareness of the spirit of God within as revealed to us in Christ and in the response the soul makes to that presence in reverent, obedient trust. The spirit of man needing, knowing, enjoying the presence of God within and finding itself purified, fortified, enriched by that experience—that is the essence of Christianity. It is an inward experience of divine help.

"Deep calleth unto deep." The deepest there is in him, that love which came all the way to Calvary and laid down its life that it might win ours! That depth of moral interest in him calls to the deepest there is in us, our capacity for fellowship with a love like that. His overture of mercy and our acceptance of it in grateful, obedient trust! His offer

of fellowship and our response in loyalty and love —that is the essence of Christian life. Upon that bed-rock of spiritual experience Christ will build his church. The foundation of the whole Christian movement is to be found in that inward experience which changes badness into goodness, weakness into strength, moral indifference into high-hearted devotion. Upon that the Lord will build his kingdom, which is an everlasting kingdom.

Now that inward experience will naturally find expression in acts of worship, simple or elaborate according to the taste, the temperament, and the training of the individual. The Quaker does it in one way and the Roman Catholic in another. Differences of expression, but the same sense of awe and reverence at the heart of both methods!

This inward experience naturally prompts people to ally themselves with one or another of the great companies of aspiring men and women. It is best that it should be so—any experience gains in dignity, in power, in usefulness by being organized and socialized. The man who joins the church will not take his little private portion of spiritual satisfaction off somewhere to be consumed alone. He

comes with his fellow-Christians around the table of the Lord that his worship may be corporate as well as personal.

This inward experience formulates what it has learned into a carefully considered philosophy of life for the instruction and guidance of others. Here are the creeds of Christendom! This inward experience utters itself in conduct which makes for personal and social well-being. Religion which does not find expression in fair dealing, in kindly speech, in unselfish service, is no better than sounding brass or tinkling cymbal. All these belong to that well-rounded practice which follows upon the possession of such an inward experience. But the fact still stands that the very essence of Christian life is to be found in the soul's response to those eternal verities in which we live and move and are. Until we know them, we just aren't.

Every one of those aspects of Christianity named by the twenty men you met on Broadway has had in it at times altogether too much flesh and blood and not enough of the spirit of the Father in heaven. Organized ecclesiastical Christianity has sometimes shown itself narrow, bigoted, intolerant. The flesh

and blood in one section of the Christian Church has undertaken to fight the flesh and blood in some other section. It has forgotten the teaching of the apostle: "The body of Christ hath many members, and all members have not the same office." We are all members one of another in the unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. The strife and contention which have marred certain periods of church history have come not from the Father in heaven but from misguided flesh and blood.

Men have sometimes insisted upon just one mode of baptism, the use of a given amount of water rather than the use of some other given amount. They have forgotten the wise words of him who was called "John the Baptist": "I indeed baptize you with water"—that was all he could do. "One cometh after me mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear, he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit." And that is the only baptism which counts—the water at best, whether it is used abundantly or sparingly, is only a symbol.

Men have sometimes insisted upon just one method of administering the sacrament of remembrance. The One who instituted that sacrament

made very little of the precise form. Our Lord Jesus the same night that he was betrayed, when he first celebrated the Lord's Supper, took bread and broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: "This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another. Love one another as I have loved you." That was to be the final test of true discipleship.

Men have sometimes become angry and abusive because they could not agree concerning the precise method and measure of inspiration in the Bible. Some of them have insisted on "verbal inspiration," some on "plenary inspiration," some on "the modern historical method of interpreting Scripture," and some have seemed to forget that there was any kind of inspiration in the Scriptures. Yet when the debate was over and they cooled off and sat down, they were all ready to say together: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. It makes men wise unto salvation and furnishes them thoroughly for all good work."

Therein lies the true inspiration of the Bible, in its ability to find, to purify, to satisfy the inner life of the one who "reads, marks, learns, and in-

wardly digests" this word of God to his own soul. Not in some claim as to the accuracy of that statement about a prophet causing an ax head to swim in a pool of water! Not in some insistence upon the credibility of that story about three men walking unhurt in a blast furnace heated seven times hotter than it was wont to be heated and coming out without even the smell of fire in their garments! Not in some contention that the statements of these early chapters of Genesis are to be taken as literal and exact records of scientific truth to be preferred to the record which we find written in the rocks! All that contention belongs to the flesh and blood of religion rather than to a knowledge of the spirit of the Father who is in heaven.

Men have become heated and hostile in discussing the precise method of divine redemption, the technique by which the sufferings of Christ became efficacious for our moral recovery. They have talked sometimes as if they thought that they had got the whole ocean of divine love into their little half-pint bottles of theological definition. It was an outstanding college president in the South, a man who combines scholarly distinction in the field of science with a devout Christian life, who said

not long ago: "All this clatter of discussion about the precise method of Christ's sacrifice of himself upon the cross for our salvation is only a little less alien and profane than the gambling of the Roman soldiers for the seamless robe at the foot of the cross." It has to do with the flesh and blood of religion rather than with those sacred experiences induced in our hearts by the spirit of the Father who is in heaven.

"He gave himself for us!" On Calvary, that was the supreme hour in the history of man's moral recovery! But all the way back to that time when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy, he was giving himself for us. There was "a lamb slain from the foundation of the world," an eternal heartache and heartbreak in heaven over the wrong-doing of men on earth.

And on down through all the ages since Calvary, he has been giving himself for us. He comes not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give himself for our release from the mastery of evil, for our deliverance from all that is unworthy of our high estate as children of the Most High. "Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the

sheep, through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant"—it is a perpetual work of redemption—"make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight." And the soul's response to that divine mercy is the very essence of Christian life.

"God was in Christ" in a manner and in a measure altogether unique "reconciling the world unto himself." He was doing something on our behalf through Christ which results in our moral recovery.

And as Harnack, our greatest church historian, has pointed out, "Wherever the gospel of Christ has gone, animal sacrifices have disappeared." There are Jews in Jerusalem to-day, thousands of them, but they are not offering the blood of bullocks or of goats in atonement for their sins. There are Jews in the city of New York to-day, hundreds of thousands of them, more than there ever were at any one time in Jerusalem, but when you visit their places of worship there are no animal sacrifices to be seen. The spirit of Christ in the life of the world, whether men name his name as Savior and Lord or not, wipes the animal sacrifices off the religious map. It is not the work of flesh and blood—it is

the work of the spirit of the Father in heaven as he has revealed himself to us supremely in Jesus Christ his Son.

Set it down then once for all, that saving faith is not membership in a certain organization, or the careful performance of some bit of ritual or the intellectual acceptance of some stoutly orthodox set of theological beliefs. Saving faith is always something inward and personal. It is a personal relation, to the Supreme Person in history, Jesus Christ. "I know whom"—"whom" rather than "what"—"I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him." It is a personal relationship from start to finish.

May it not be that we are unduly disturbed in these days by the inability of these various groups of religious men, conservatives and liberals, fundamentalists and modernists, to agree in their interpretation of the eternal verities? Much of the strife has to do with matters which after all are only secondary. When the white light of heaven shines out from the eternal city, it streams forth through many gates. "On the east three gates, on the west three gates, on the north three gates, on the south

three gates." The atmospheric conditions on any one of these four sides of the city may produce a certain refraction of that white light, breaking it up into its many strands of color such as we see in the rainbow when drops of water are falling from the skies. The various colors are all contained in the white light, and when men face toward that light they may enter through any one of those many gates into the city that hath foundations whose builder and maker is God.

Why should we all think alike? If all men thought exactly alike, it would be very much as if no one thought at all. The science of botany is one thing and the growth of the plants is quite another thing. Botany is a very interesting and useful science. But if all the books on botany were burned up and if all the botanists should die—which may God forbid—the plants would go right on growing and blossoming and bearing fruit, just as if nothing had happened.

The life of the spirit is one thing, and the varying interpretations placed upon it by these widely differing theologians, Calvinists, Arminians, Ritschlians, fundamentalists, modernists, and all the

rest, are quite another. And if all the theological books were burned up, and if all these contending theologians should die—which may God also forbid; some of them sorely need a further probation—millions of men and women would go right on living in and for and by the love of God, just as if nothing had happened. They would go right on giving expression to that love of God in their hearts by kindly service rendered to their fellows.

Religion is life, while theology is only a more or less accurate interpretation of that life. Religion is life, the life of the spirit of God in the souls of men. And the court of last appeal must always be to our own inward experience of divine help brought near to us in Jesus Christ.

The inward takes precedence always over the outward even when we view the outward in its most august forms. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." How glorious are the skies on any clear night!

Yet when Jesus wanted men to see the beauty and the glory of the kingdom of heaven, He did not point to the starry skies. He took a little child and

set him in the midst of his disciples, saying: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven! Except ye become as little children, ye cannot enter in." The child can think and feel, the child can love and adore, as all the stars that shine cannot. If then you would enter into the kingdom of heaven to go no more out, become as a little child, filial, trustful, obedient in the house and in the heart and in the service of your Father who is in heaven. That inward experience of divine help is the very essence of Christian life.

CHAPTER XV

THE LAND OF PROMISE

HERE is a vivid statement of the contrast between the flat rainless delta of lower Egypt and the hills and valleys of Palestine with their varying climate! "The land thou goest in to possess is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs." The writer had seen those Israelites drawing water from the Nile with their foot pumps or making little furrows in the soft soil with their bare feet, so that the overflow of the mighty river would water their fields. All the conditions of prosperity seemed to be in their own hands. The seed, the soil, and the water of the river were all under their control. They felt that they did not need to look up—they looked down at the ground which brought forth plentifully and filled their barns.

Over against that mode of life this writer set an-

other sort of situation altogether. "The land ye go to possess is a land of hills and valleys," where the irrigation practised in that level country of the Nile delta would be out of the question. "It is a land that drinketh water of the rain of heaven" —they would have to look up because the water needed for their crops must come from the skies. "A land which the Lord thy God careth for"— they would feel a new sense of dependence upon Him and of coöperation with the Giver of all good gifts. "And the eyes of the Lord are always upon it from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year"—that new life in the land of promise would have to be lived under the eye and by the aid of him who is from everlasting to everlasting.

The writer shared the primitive view that the ordinary, unvarying processes of nature, like the power of gravitation, the revolution of the earth (which gives us day and night), the fertility of the soil, were somehow less divine than those processes which cannot be foreseen, like the rainfall and the good season which favors an abundant harvest. He felt, therefore, that those Israelites in the land of promise would enter into a deeper sense of the overarching providence of God which would bring

them into a finer fellowship with him in all their ways.

Let me apply that principle to the Christian life which many of us are trying to live! Our final allegiance is to a set of forces and values which are not altogether within our control. Christian life is not a mere question of human energy and ingenuity. It draws its supplies from above. It is "a land which the Lord our God careth for"—it cannot be lived for an hour without him. In a certain intimate way "the eyes of the Lord are always upon it." His tender mercies are over all his works but his eyes are upon those who strive to do his will.

The Christian life looks up; it drinks water of the rain of heaven. What do men mean by "being religious"? I use the term broadly, as including the religion of the Protestant, the Catholic, the Hebrew, the religion of honest, devout men generally. Wherever you find a conscious personal bearing toward a Being conceived of as divine and the expression of that bearing in worship and in conduct ordered with reference to what is believed to be the will of that divine Being, there you have religion.

No other single interest can be named which has

entered so widely and so powerfully into the renewal of man's inner life, into the shaping of his ultimate ideals, into the formation of character, as that sense of contact between the human and the divine which we call religion. It looks up; it drinks water from the rain of heaven; its source of spiritual dynamic is from above.

Here is the everlasting difference between religion and ethics. Those carefully devised moral programs for human conduct lack something. They lack the deeper source of motive and stimulus. They lack that divine something which renews the springs of action, purifies the affections, steadies and strengthens the will, gives reach and grasp to aspiration, reinforces all the finer impulses of our hearts. Religion does just that. It was to men of faith that the ancient promise was made when they lined up against the forces of evil. "One of you shall chase a thousand, and two of you shall put ten thousand to flight." It is the man of faith, fully assured that God is with him and for him, who faces the field undaunted.

"Work out your own salvation." Put down evil under your feet. Stand up to your duty without flinching. Render the required service to your day

and generation. That is good ethics; that is sound morality. But from start to finish it is the flat, rainless delta of the Nile. It is only the first half of what the apostle said to the men at Philippi. Before he let his voice fall, he added something else, something more significant. "Work out your own salvation, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to accomplish his good pleasure." That is religion; it is the sure promise of victory all along the line to every one who walks by faith.

"Love one another"—that is ethics. It is a universal duty. But it is a sheer lift on the dead level of human effort. "Love one another, as I have loved you"—that is religion. We love, because he first loved us. It is by his love for us shed abroad in our hearts that we are made willing and able to love one another. That is the land of promise that drinketh water of the rain of heaven.

"Be ye therefore perfect"—that is ethics. Ethics at their best, for there is nothing higher than being perfect! But again it is the flat, unaided Nile delta. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect"—that is religion. It is because we have a Father in heaven, because we are striving to live in the filial spirit as his children,

that we can hope at last to be perfect even as he is perfect. He is the true vine and we are the branches, infilled and reinforced by the mightier life of the vine. The life of faith looks up and thereby renews its strength.

The man who has "the will to believe" feels his own uncertain confidence supported by his sense of fellowship with the spirit of truth, who is the Holy Spirit, leading him at last into all truth. The man who has "the will to do His will," finds his own faltering purposes reinforced by their sense of agreement with that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God. It is fellowship, coöperation, a concerted movement all the way. As religious men and women, we are colaborers with him who is the Author and Finisher of these imperfect lives of ours. The land ye go to possess in the name of our Christian faith is not a land of Egypt, where men lean upon their own understanding and rely solely upon the strength of their right arms. It is a land that drinketh water of the rain of heaven that it may bring forth all the fine fruits of the spirit.

The Christian life is a land of hills and valleys, of ups and downs. Thirty years ago I rode my

horse for two hundred miles through Palestine. For the most part, it was anything but easy going. The way was beset with difficulty and with danger. For hours and for days together, we found the way steep, rough, and rocky as a mountain side. It was no easy task which those Israelites undertook when they sought to gain a footing and to make their homes in that land of promise.

What of it! What is human life for but to face and to overcome obstacles? That way honor lies. Phillips Brooks, who for a score of years preached from the pulpit of Trinity Church, in Boston, used to say, with a fine scorn, to the young fellows at Harvard, "Never pray for easy lives—pray rather to be strong men." And One greater than he said to another group of young men in the last hour of his earthly life, "In this world ye shall have tribulation." *Thlipsis* was the word he used—pressure, urgency, weight of obligation! "In this world ye shall be under pressure, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." And by the aid he brings, we can. That was his message, and there is none better.

Hills and valleys, ups and downs, bright days and dark days, rain or shine, through thick and

through thin! It all comes to us sooner or later, and it is all a part of the land which the Lord our God careth for. Nothing falls into these lives of ours, or out, without his notice. The very hairs of our heads are all numbered in that personal interest which he feels for every one of his children. And to those who love God, all things, taken in their completeness, in their final outcome, in the net result they yield, work together for good. They work together for good in the final issue because those who love God are already living in that land of promise which the Lord our God careth for.

What gave us Lincoln and Livingstone, William Booth of the Salvation Army and Jacob Riis, Jane Addams and Edith Cavell? Civil strife and dark continents, city slums and the World War! Hard places, all of them! The soft, sunny corners, where cats purr and lazy men doze, would never have produced that type of moral fiber. It is the challenge of difficulty which calls out our moral reserves.

What gave us this multitude which no man can number singing their song of triumph before the great white throne? Their names may not be in "Who's Who," but they are written in "the Lamb's

Book of Life." "What are these who are arrayed in white robes with palms in their hands? One of the elders said unto me, "These are they that come up out of great tribulation"—*Thlipsis*—the same word again, and the same searching experiences! They came out of great tribulation—and here they are with victory inscribed in their very faces. "And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long, steals on the ear the distant triumph song; and hearts are brave again, and arms are strong."

The land you go to possess as Christians is not as the land of Egypt where men live in haughty self-sufficiency because they feel that all the materials of human well-being are under their own control. It is something higher, finer, harder in every way. It is not an eay task to live a Christian life. "It is not easy," as Charles E. Jefferson of New York said recently," to stand up between the mechanism of nature on one side and the slaughter-house of a war-stained history on the other, and say, 'I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, whose tender mercies are over all his works.' " All the more the man of God says it; and then he sets himself to live that life which

shall bring nearer the day when these clouds shall roll back and his faith will be recognized as valid.

There is a famous painting which pictures a little cherub pressing his soft finger against the sharp point of a thorn in the Savior's crown as he suffered on Calvary. The cherub cannot understand it. He does not know the meaning of pain, and the look of wonder on his face is true to life.

But the women weeping at the foot of the cross know, and another expression is portrayed on their faces. They have learned obedience by the things they have suffered. They have traversed the ways of sacrifice and they know that "without the shedding of blood," there is no final redemption. A land of hills and of valleys, of joys and of sorrows, of victory and of defeat! But in those deeper lines of understanding which are engraved upon our faces as we grow older, and in those finer sympathies which come to possess our hearts, we know beyond a peradventure that, from start to finish, it is "a land which the Lord our God careth for."

The Christian life is lived under the watchful interest of him who is our Father. "The eyes of

the Lord are always upon it from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year."

Here was a man who was not just setting sail for a happy voyage of spiritual discovery! He was coming into port for the last time, as the event proved, so far as earthly voyages went. He was writing a letter to a young man. He had already visited all the countries which the young man knew about and many more besides. He had felt the urge of hot desire, the bite and sting of temptation, the quick resentment for unjust treatment received, even as the young man was feeling it all now. He had come straight through the year without missing a month, spring, summer, autumn, and winter. Here away late in December he was summing up his philosophy of life for one less experienced.

"Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ"—accept those disciplines which mean added efficiency and character. "Watch in all things and make full proof of thy ministry"—keep your eyes open and your mind upon your task, that your life may be an asset rather than a liability. "Stir up the gift of God that is within you"—discover and utilize that hidden capacity for something still finer.

"I am now ready to be offered; the time of my departure is at hand; I have finished my course; I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown." A crown of rejoicing! And not for him alone but for all who strive to live the life.

Come what may, we live under the eye of him who seeth every precious thing. He takes note of each fight against temptation, each act of quiet endurance in the face of disappointment, the bearing of each heavy burden and the uncomplaining acceptance of duty, even when it is hard. "His eye seeth every precious thing," and the eyes of the Lord are always upon us from the beginning to the end.

I have been a minister of Christ for forty-one years. I have seen the fire burn low in many an eye through loss of hope. I have seen the hair whiten faster than it should because of the anxiety within. I have seen furrows of care plowed deep in faces once smooth and fair in their easy, prosperous joy. I have seen brave souls bearing heavy loads which made them stoop, yet carrying on, faced toward the front. It all comes in the day's work, before the sun goes down. It is the way the game

has to be played, if we are to play it at all. It is life, and there is no escape. If it has not come to you as yet, it will. It is out there now waiting, and it may come within the next year.

In the fall of 1918, there was a private soldier wearing the uniform of France, standing in a front-line trench in the Great War. He had witnessed many frightful scenes. He had seen hundreds of men as good as he wiped off the slate. He did not understand the meaning of all those puzzling maneuvers. He did not know how it was all coming out.

But he knew that at Headquarters there was a man strong, wise, devout, a man who often stole away to pray in some wayside chapel for strength and guidance, a man whose name was Marshal Foch, who did know what it all meant. His faith in his commander whom he had never seen, made that private soldier strong and true to do the duty that lay nearest, leaving the result to that one who knew. And that is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

When I look out upon the greed and the strife of the world, the vice and the crime, the pain and the grief, the moral indifference and the spiritual

sloth, I am appalled. How can we explain this, and how can we reconcile that? How is it all coming out? When will the day dawn and the shadows flee away?

I am only a private marching in the ranks, but marching under the banner of the Captain of our salvation. I say to myself and I say to you: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Hope thou in God." "The Eternal is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms."

We may be sure that the Almighty has not cut out for himself a piece of work which will prove too hard for him. He intends to win. We have the word of him who spake as never man spake assuring us that the quality of life which we saw in him shall not go down in defeat. It will reign until it has put all enemies of the divine purpose under its feet. In that high faith we live and move and serve.

Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
  Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
  By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

. . . . .

O, yet we trust that somehow good
  Will be the final goal of ill,

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void
When God hath made the pile complete.

"For the land thou goest in to possess is a land of hills and valleys that drinketh water of the rain of heaven, a land which the Lord thy God careth for, and the eyes of the Lord are always upon it from the beginning of the year, even unto the end of the year."

CHAPTER XVI

HIS LAST WILL

HOW much human interest attaches to the reading of almost any man's will! Here is a life projecting itself again into a world which it has already quitted. Here is a voice from the unseen uttering its mandates as to what shall be done with this and that and the other piece of property. "He being dead yet speaketh" through these various bequests.

The dead hand is not dead—it is alive to its finger tips, holding within the firm clasp of its influence all manner of interests. A man's will is not just a piece of paper; it is living, active, powerful. It does things. When people gather to hear the reading of a will, they never go to sleep, especially if they are hoping that they may have been remembered in that will.

In a certain chapter in John's Gospel we find the Master's last will and testament. He saw the shadow

of the Cross falling athwart his pathway. He knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world. He was closing up his earthly affairs and making his will.

What did he leave? What people were remembered in his will? He did not leave money—he had no property. He was a poor man. The foxes had holes and the birds of the air had nests, but there had been times when the Son of Man had nowhere to lay his head. He made no bequests to colleges or art museums, to hospitals or homes for the aged. Yet somehow, wherever his words have gone, these institutions have sprung up as if good seed had been sown in good soil. Good seed was sown in good soil. His words are the finest of the wheat for the production of good deeds.

He had no property of his own, but what did he leave? He left the impress of a certain quality of life upon the life of the race. It is there to-day, more widespread and deeper than ever. "Peace I leave with you, my peace!" That was His legacy to the needy world, and no one who ever walked this common earth has left a bequest so rich. He being poor has by his poverty made millions of

people rich. "Peace I leave with you—my peace, I give unto you!"

Now what was that peace which he left as his main bequest? It was no mere animal content. It was not the peace of the cow that fills herself with clover and then lies down in the shade to chew her cud. You have all read Walt Whitman, whose poetry oftentimes was of the earth earthy. He stood once looking at the placid satisfaction of a group of animals, and he tells us that he envied them. "They never whine about their sins," he said. "They never agonize over their soul's salvation."

No, they do not. And it is the total absence of that spiritual unrest, which the misguided poet seemed to despise, which leaves them animals. If cows hungered after righteousness, if their souls were athirst for the living God, they would not be cows. The peace which Christ bestows is no mere animal content—that would be altogether too easy.

It is not the peace of stagnation. The pool of water, or the pond with no outlet, may show a surface as smooth as a mirror. It lies there within its

banks securely sheltered from all the winds that blow, untroubled by the mad currents which are found in mountain streams. It has peace—but it is the peace of stagnation, and the pond may soon be covered with a thick, green, useless scum. Stagnation is not peace; it is death.

The peace which Christ gives has always a background of stress and struggle. "Courage of the right sort," some one has said, "is not the absence of fear"—that also might be death, for the dead man is not afraid of anything. "Courage is the overcoming of fear in the presence of danger by certain higher qualities of mind and heart." And peace is not the absence of trouble; it is the mastery of trouble. When those saints stood before the great white throne, clothed with white robes and with palms in their hands, singing with all their might, they had not been carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease. They had not been wafted in by gentle zephyrs. "These are they that came up out of great tribulation." They had "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," in lives of sacrificial effort. They had won out in the face of difficulty. The peace of Christ has always that background of struggle.

Peace comes from the power one gains to live with one's self, with one's fellows, and with one's Maker in that high, fine serenity of spirit which is about the noblest quality known to the mind of man. How sadly great sections of our American life need just that to-day! People have not learned to live with themselves. There was a woman—I would not say that she was a Christian, but she had been baptized and could repeat the Apostles' Creed —who was heard to say to a friend over the telephone: "Oh, we had such a wretched evening last night! My husband was detained at the office and came home to dinner too late for us to go to the theater. We called up a dozen different friends and could not get anybody to play bridge. It rained so hard that we did not care to go out in the car. So we just stayed at home all the evening." Poor woman! She could not live with herself for two hours, even with her husband thrown in for good measure.

"My peace I leave with you." The Master had learned to live with himself and with his fellows and with the Father. He lived quietly, easily, restfully, trustfully, patiently, serenely, peacefully, joyously, courageously, confidently. He did it seven

days in the week, for fifty-two weeks in the year and showed himself able to do it through all the unending years to come. To live in that way is to have life which is life indeed. He stands ready to share that state of mind, that habit of life, that quality of being with all those who put their trust in him. "Peace I leave with you—my peace."

Let me come to closer grips with that bequest! What are the main elements in the peace he bestowed? I would say that they are threefold.

First, it is the peace which springs from a just sense of relative values. Millions of people fail to find peace because they are working their heads off and worrying their hearts out over matters which at best are only second or third rate. Jesus saw that same fret and fuss in his day. "Be not anxious," he said, "saying, What shall we eat?" What shall we drink? What shall we put on? The life is more than meat; it is more than raiment."

What shall I eat? is a necessary question, but it is altogether secondary. The primary question is, Am I worth feeding? Is it important that I should be kept alive? Does the world need another one of my type? As a rule, the people who make the most

fuss about what they shall eat and how it shall be cooked and the way it shall be served, are those in whose case it is by no means clear that they are worth feeding.

What shall I put on? If I am going into society, I must put on something. But that also is secondary. The primary question is, Is it important that I should go? Am I worth dressing up? Will society be any wiser, any better, any happier because I am there? And, generally speaking, those people who might well feel considerable uncertainty at that point are the ones who talk the most and think the most about what they shall put on.

How much depends on getting one's scale of values right! Put first that which is first. "Seek first the kingdom of God," the rule of the divine spirit in your own heart. Then upon the secure basis of that finer quality of life, all minor interests can be arranged. Life is not made up in the main of things to be eaten and worn, of things to be strewed around the house and scattered about the world. Life is made up of certain qualities of mind and heart. These may go with an abundance of things or with a scarcity of things, as the case may be. And when one's scale of values is right, he

does not allow himself to be fretted and fussed by that which is petty.

"The kingdom of heaven," which we are to seek first, is not some far-away state of celestial reward which only a few choice saints are permitted to enter when they die. The kingdom of heaven is not some sacred enclosure over here at one side quite apart from the interests of food, clothing, shelter, work and play, family life and citizenship. "The kingdom of heaven is within you." It is a way of looking at things, a habit of life, a quality of being. When we seek that first, and find it and live in it, our sense of relative values is right and we share in Christ's peace.

In the second place, the peace he bestows is the peace of right action. "Oh, that my people would hearken unto me," the Lord said to Israel at one time. "Oh, that they would hearken unto my voice, then they would have peace like a river." The river is not idle nor stagnant; it is water in action. It may carry great ships upon its bosom, propelling them, if need be, by its own current. It may turn the wheels of industry, causing mills and factories to produce articles of utility in wide abundance.

But following its own course, flowing calmly within its own banks, the river has peace. And that is the peace which the Lord bestows upon those who live to do his will. "Hearken unto my words and thou shalt have peace like a river."

It was this thought that lay at the heart of the Apostle's final appeal to the Philippians. "Be anxious for nothing. By prayer and supplication let your requests be made known unto God. Whatsoever things are just, true, clean, honorable, reputable, lovable, think on these things." Build them into your lives in the daily round, "and the God of peace shall be with you! The peace of God that passeth all understanding shall garrison"—that was the word he used, taken from the sense of security in some mighty fortress—"the peace of God that passeth all understanding shall garrison your minds and hearts in the knowledge and the love of God." When a man is steadily and serenely intent upon doing those things which are just, true, clean, honorable, reputable, lovable, he enters into that serenity of spirit which Paul portrayed. He has the peace of rightly ordered action.

The Apostle practised what he preached. This letter to the Philippians was written from a Ro-

man prison. He was under sentence of death and was only waiting for the sunset gun. Yet how he sang of peace! "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know how to be abased and I know how to abound. I am instructed both to be full and to suffer hunger. I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me. And I press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God." In that life of heroic action, ordered with reference to what he believed to be the will of God for him, he found peace, a peace above all earthly dignities. And every man who follows in his train, will share in that peace.

Finally, it is a peace which springs from a certain relationship, supreme and lasting. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee." Does that mean immunity from all the storms that blow, from all forms of physical disaster, from all the grief and pain that falls to our lot?

Not for a moment! "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling," may express the pious wish of some ardent, optimistic soul. But "in this world ye shall have tribulation; the whole creation groans and travails

in pain even until now," much more nearly represents the facts of experience. Life is not easy; life is difficult, for all those who face the music and meet their obligations.

How then do we find peace? We find it in that supreme relationship where our real lives, our true selves "hid with Christ in God." We gain a certain quality of being which is beyond the reach of all earthly disaster. Some fierce wind may lash the surface of the ocean into the angriest sort of sea. But all the while there are calm depths beneath which know nothing of all this commotion. The storm of rain and wind and sleet may make these lower levels of atmosphere almost intolerable, yet all the while there are upper levels where the sun is shining steadily. Your real life may be hid with Christ in God; then, no matter what comes, you have peace.

The great Apostle whose words I have just quoted lived a life of strain and stress. His Christian life was shot through from start to finish with difficulty. He once summed it all up by calling it "a good fight." "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, and I have fought a good fight." "Thrice was I shipwrecked; a day and a night have

I been in the deep. In perils of robbers, in perils in the wilderness, in perils from my own countrymen!"

But when he would find peace, he turned away from that which is outward to that which is inward, from that which changes to that which changes not. He knew that supreme relationship where all things work together for good in their final outcome to those who love God. "I am persuaded that neither life nor death, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor anything else shall be able to separate us from the love of God." His sense of relatedness to that infinite good will of God kept him in perfect peace.

How much this hurried, fretted modern life of ours needs just that! How far is this passion for speed (which has become an obsession with us), really getting us? We can go from New York to Chicago on the Twentieth Century Limited in twenty hours. We can do it by aëroplane in six. Once it took thirty. When men traveled by stagecoach it took a week. But are we quite sure that, when we get to Chicago, we shall show ourselves wiser, better, more serviceable to Chicago's inter-

ests than were our slowly moving grandfathers?

We may soon be crossing the Atlantic Ocean in a day. Lindbergh did. It was a wonderful achievement by a wonderfully fine young man. It takes five or six days on a steamer. When Columbus came over in a sailing vessel, it took a month or more. Even so, the leisurely sea voyage has a value of its own. The voice of God upon the sea is like the sound of many waters. His calm, unhurried judgments are a great deep. Shall we be able to do any better for Europe when we get there, because we have approached it at a more rapid gait?

All this is a parable. We are in danger of carrying that obsession as to the importance of speed into all our interests. In every city there are multitudes of people who have been out of breath mentally and spiritually for years. They have not worn a look of peace upon their faces for so long that if they suddenly appeared with it, their own children would not know them. How much they need to "wait upon the Lord" in quietness and confidence, centering their minds upon him, until they have renewed that inner, finer strength! How much they need in the ordering of thought, feeling, and action to gain that quality of life which will enable

them to meet their obligations, to overcome the obstacles and to achieve the high ends of human existence, with a certain, serene joy!

There was a wise man once who said, "Nobody is anybody until he stands in right relations to somebody." We find ourselves through these relationships, domestic and social, industrial, political, and religious. The man who stands alone is no man at all.

You might go one step further and say that nobody is anybody in the highest sense until he stands in right relations to that Supreme Somebody whom we call "Our Father in Heaven." He made us for himself, and our hearts are restless, empty, unsatisfied, until they rest in Him. The Master's psychology was as sound as His ethics. "If ye know me, ye know my Father also"—through Christ our lives are linked up with One who is above all and through all and in us all. Then, and only then, do we find peace.

There are many ways of propelling a boat. If you are content to remain near the shore where the water is shallow, you can thrust down a long pole and push yourself along. If you want to move out where the water is deeper, you may use a pair of

oars and take hold of the sea itself to propel your craft. But if you wish to launch out into the deep and do business in great waters, you had best spread your sails and take hold of those mighty forces in the upper air. Then you will go before the breeze with all sails set.

In like manner, if you would live strongly and worthily, usefully and joyously, you cannot do it by using earthly forces alone. Establish your personal connections with those higher, vaster forms of energy which belong in the upper air, that your life may move serenely on its way, endued with power from above.

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